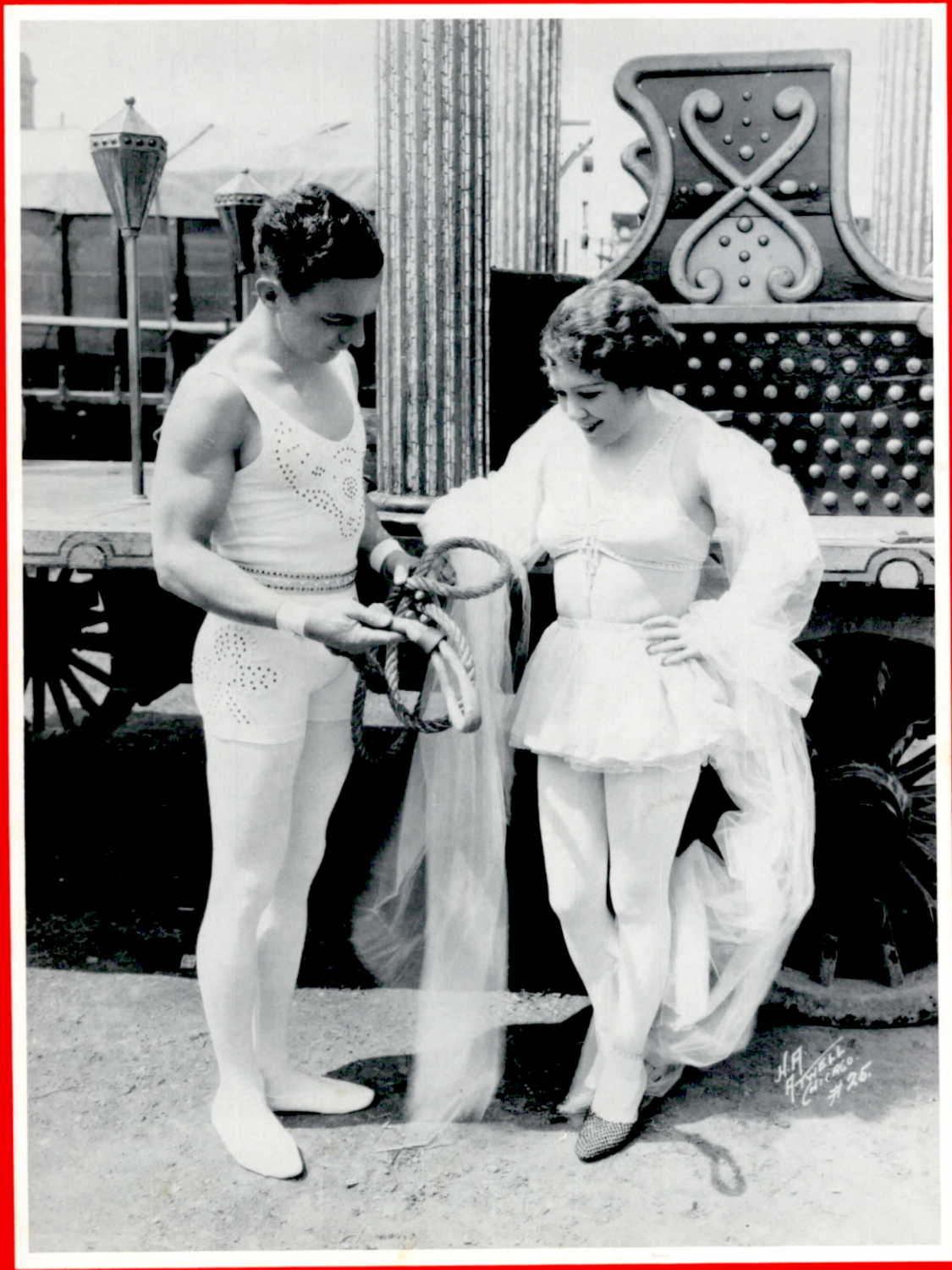
Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF
THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1991



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THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 35, No. 1 **January-February 1991**

FRED D. PFENING, JR., EDITOR

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor-Bill Biggerstaff, Production and Graphics
Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

BANDWAGON, The Journal of the Circus Historical Society (USPS 406-390) (ISSN 0005 4968), is published bimonthly. Second class postage paid at Columbus, OH. Editorial, advertising and circulation office is located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221. Phone (614) 294-5361. Advertising rates are: Full page $95.00, half page $55.00, quarter page $35.00. Minimum ad is $20.00. The BANDWAGON is produced using a Macintosh IIcx computer, DesignStudio and TypeStyler software.

Subscription rates, $17.00 to members and non-members in the United States, $19.00 per year outside the United States. Single copies $3.00 plus $1.00 postage. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BANDWAGON, 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212.

Offices of the Circus Historical Society are located at 1030 Chestnut Blvd., Chesterton, IN 46304.

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

Alfredo Codona and Lillian Leitzel were known as the king and queen of the circus on the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey show in the late 1920s. Their marriage in 1929 was short lived.

Leitzel fell in Copenhagen, Denmark and died on March 15, 1931. Codona erected a large monument in the Inglewood Cemetery, Long Beach, California. The monument, titled "Reunion," containing a marble sculpture of Codona with wings embracing Leitzel, was unveiled on December 10, 1931. At the base of the statue are two trapeze rings, one broken. Following his death Codona was buried next to Leitzel on August 3, 1937.

This 1929 Harry Atwell photograph is from the Evelyn Joyce Cook collection.

DUES NOTICES

Circus Historical Society dues and subscription invoices for the fiscal year starting May 1, 1991 will be mailed in March.

Please do not send your payment to the secretary-treasurer prior to receiving your notice.

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1260 S. R. 97, Lot 147
Bellville, OH 44813

Scott Sullivan 3654
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Des Plaines, IL 60016

Ray Cornew 3655
194 Vista Dr.
Marlton, NJ 08053

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Lyle Coates 3657
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Tony Greiner 3658
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Art Christensen 3660
1622 Dakota
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620 Ohio St.
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1771 Rose Lane
New Brighton, MN 55112

Ronald Hamm 3663
7332 Drew Ave. North
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

George Morgey, Jr. 3664
39 Princeton Ave.
Bellmawr, NJ 08031

Danny McLean 3665
1975 Coronado Dr.
Rivera, AZ 86442

Jeanette Williams 3666
2011 61st St.
Sarasota, FL 34243

REINSTATED

Ray E. Morgan 3544
6815 Flint
Shawnee Mission, KS 66203

CORRECTION

The Davenport Family article that appeared in the November-December 1990 issue stated that Orrin Davenport appeared in 1924 on Hagenbeck-Wallace and the Moslem Shrine. He was on the Hagenbeck show in 1924 and at the Moslem Shrine and New York Hippodrome in 1925.

The cutines of Davenport illustrations at the bottom of pages 26 and 27 were transposed.

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1991 CHS CONVENTION UPDATE

Charleston, South Carolina, with its ante bellum homes, narrow streets and splendid architecture will be the host of this year's Circus Historical Society gathering from May 22 to 25. From the Holiday Inn Riverside we will have a delightful view of the Ashley River and the city of Charleston.

Members need to send in the attached hotel reservation card as soon as possible to insure adequate rooms. The cost for a two bedded room will be $60.00.

Those wishing to present a paper should inform Convention Chairman John Polascek of your subject. We will be holding the convention meetings at the College of Charleston which borders on Marion Square, the circus lot for the one ring wonder Circus Flora. In addition to papers, the circus, the annual banquet and auction, there will be time to explore this charming 300 year old city.

The cost of registration will be $65.00 for members and $60.00 for spouses and guests. Please send the enclosed hotel card as soon as possible as this convention site will be crowded due to the opening of the Spoletto Festival which embraces music, dance, theatre, art, poetry, comedy and crafts throughout the city. There should be something for everyone.

UNDER THE TRAPEZE

By Robert McKay

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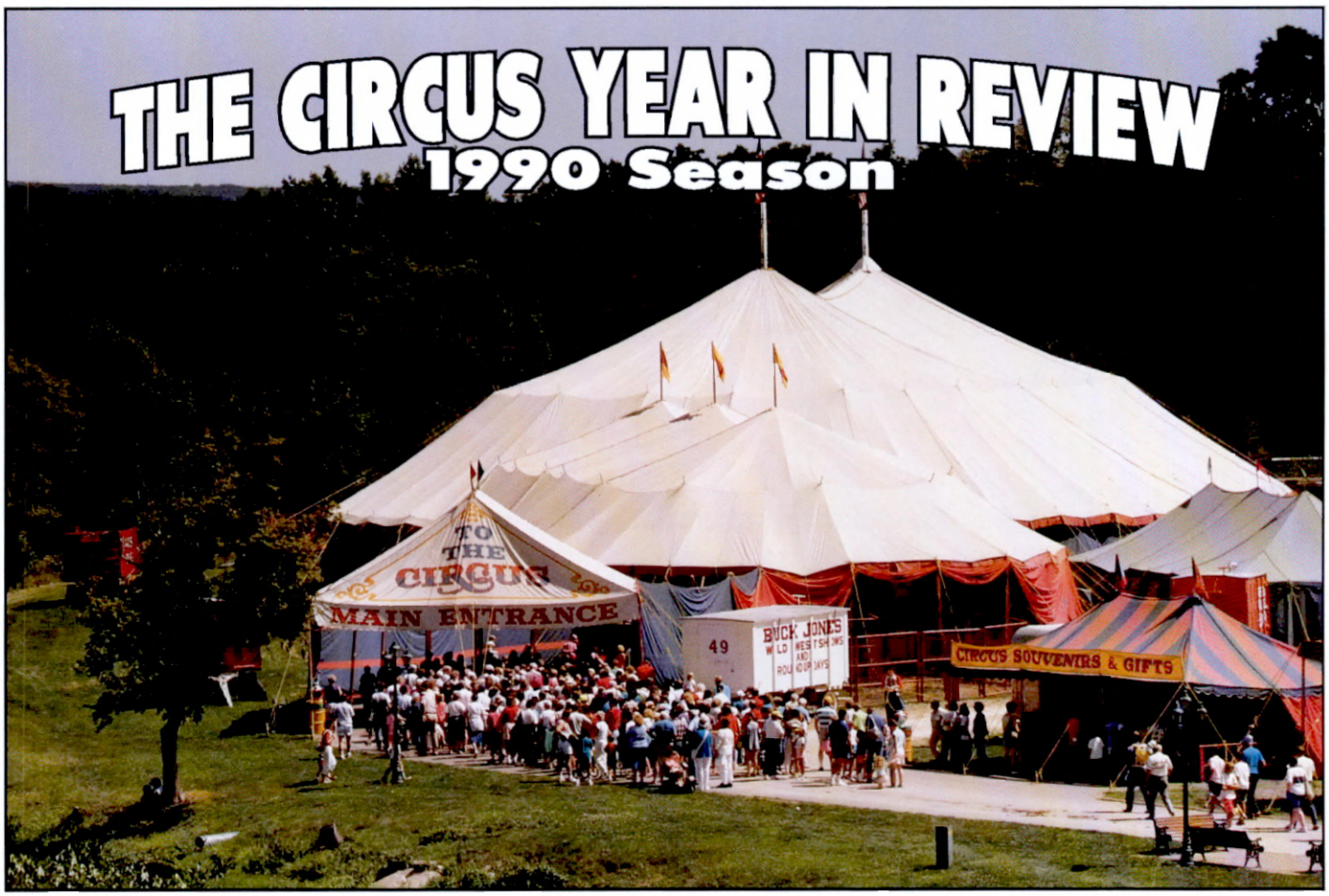
THE CIRCUS YEAR IN REVIEW
1990 Season



Patrons awaiting the opening of an afternoon performance at the Circus World Museum. Greg Parkinson photo.

BY FRED D. PFENING III

The merry-go-round stopped in 1990. After a succession of good seasons through the mid and late 1980s, the circus industry was jolted back to real life as the economy edged into a recession in late summer. While the year was nowhere near as devastating as 1842, 1893, or 1938 when nearly the entire business went into a tail spin, many managers reported business off significantly with one stating in July that grosses were off 15-20%. Another noted that New England, which had experienced the downturn before most of the nation, was a particularly difficult area in 1990. A third commented that people stayed away in droves after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August. That event increased the cost of gasoline, sending nuts through the roof at precisely the time audiences were dwindling. While a few shows closed early and others lost money, most came back winners--though marginally so.

Animal rights groups were particularly nasty with virtually all circuses with animals being picketed. Equally vexing were the ever expanding number of federal, state, and local restrictions on the care and exhibition of animals. All this was part of a larger trend in American society that impacted the medical, cosmetic, fur, and many other industries as customary uses of animals, in laboratory testing for example, came under increased fire.

The animals rights movement was composed of many groups spanning the spectrum from cat lovers to radical vegetarians who advocated banning pet ownership. They went by such names as Fund for Animals, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the Animal Rights Community, Animal Advocates, even Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights. One thing nearly all the organizations had in common was a revulsion toward the exhibition of animals in circuses.

While the usual form of protest was simply to picket performances and pass out leaflets, in at least one case the protest spilled over into the realm of civil disobedience. At an August 30 performance of Ringling-Barnum at San Francisco's Cow Palace, three demonstrators dressed as clowns were arrested after they had chained themselves to a high wire support cable. Prop hands used bolt cutters to snip the chains of the three as they shouted animal rights messages.

The circus industry, like many others, increasingly took action to counter the claims of the animal rightists. Almost every show's souvenir program took pains to assure the public that it treated its animals in a humane and dignified manner. The tiny Royal Lichtenstein Circus cleverly got across this message by means of a charming testimonial by the show's monkey about life on the road and in the ring. Ringling-Barnum went a step further by passing out a leaflet headed "Don't Be Fooled by the Demonstrators." A number of show people joined a group called Putting People First which among other things lobbied against animal rights legislation.

Animal advocates took another blow when Bobby Berosini, who had been accused of mistreating the orangutans in his Las Vegas show, was awarded $4.2 million by the court when he won his invasion of privacy and defamation suit. Although the judgement was later cut to $3.1 million and animal rights spokespersons

Don't Be Fooled By The Demonstrators

During the past year, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus has been harassed by a small group of vocal demonstrators seeking to draw your support to their views of so-called "animal rights." It is time you knew the truth about the real motives behind these demonstrators.

The "animal rights" groups appeal to your love of animals, when in fact, they are trying to raise money to promote their radical views— "total liberation" of all animals from "human custody."

In a world created by radical "animal rights" groups, humans and animals would have equal value. As their founder proudly boasted, "...a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."

They would release all "captive" animals into the wild and permit no contact between humans and animals. Theirs would be a world with no zoos, no circuses, no farms, no pet shows and even no pets in your home. You would not be permitted to drink milk, eat eggs or even to wear wool or silk!

Don't confuse these radical views with animal "welfare," or the ethical, responsible and humane treatment and care of animals. Everybody, including the people of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, loves and adores all nature's living creatures and cherishes their friendship.

For 120 years, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus has cared for, managed and provided top quality treatment to every kind of exotic and domestic animal imaginable. We have always treated and respected our animals as friends—just as you treat and respect your pet at home.

We feed, clean, groom, breed, provide shelter and medical care for our animals. We work, play, travel and live side-by-side with our animals 365 days-a-year, promoting a healthy exchange and companionship between humans and animals. And, we train them to perform athletic routines to provide enlightenment, education and entertainment for you—using the same methods you use to train your dog to "sit up" or "catch a frisbee."

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus was a leader in animal welfare long before it became a fashionable cause. We proudly stand on our record of ethical, responsible and humane treatment of all our animals.

So, don't be fooled by demonstrators who try to gain your support and your money, by playing upon your heartfelt love of animals. If their goals were to be achieved, we would all be left in a cold world without animal companions.

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Copies of this leaflet were passed out at performances of the Ringling-Barnum Circus.

vowed Berosini would never see a nickel of the award, the verdict sent a message to animal rights community that its actions could be costly. In spite of encouraging indications such as the Berosini decision, the volcanic issue of circus animals showed few signs of tormenting showmen any less by year's end.

Two other issues were important. Further legal restrictions and an increasingly negative public perception of phone solicitation were cause for alarm in some quarters. For example, a bill was introduced in Ohio to require phone solicitors to tell prospective donors that a professional fund raising firm was running the solicitation, and for the firm to file financial reports with the attorney general ninety days after each fund raising campaign. The concern in some segments of the business was that civic and other groups traditionally using circuses with phone rooms would be less likely to engage them because they would be potentially less profitable.

Another important development was regulations requiring a national driver's license, granted only after passing a difficult test, for drivers of semi trucks and trailers over a certain weight. Another provision was mandatory drug testing. The new rules had until April 1, 1992 to be fully implemented. Managers studied a number of coping strategies, including going back to rail transport and cutting the size of the show. While the impact will not be seen until the 1991 and 1992 seasons, it almost certainly will change the physical landscape of the industry, and certainly increase operating costs.

At year's end there was more pessimism about the future than had been evidenced in years as showmen expected the soft business to continue into the next season. In spite of the gloom, circuses in 1990 carried on as they had since John Ricketts, offering a huge variety of entertainment presented in virtually every possible venue from giant arenas in metropolitan centers to empty fields in crossroads towns.

The tented circus, while no longer the major force in the business, was still a highly visible and viable means of presentation, running the gambit from Big Apple to Phills Bros. and from Carson and Barnes to Fisher Bros. With some notable exceptions it became more and more a small town and suburban phenomenon as urbanites generally saw their circuses in a building.

The Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus, owned by John Pugh and Doug Holwadel, opened in its home town of Deland, Florida on March 23. As in the past, the show steamed northward along the eastern seaboard, reaching the mid-Atlantic states in early May. Most of the summer was spent in New England, New York, and New Jersey. The homeward trek started in early September, playing through the South before closing at Palm Beach, Florida on November 24. Fishkill, New York, birthplace of I. A. Van Amburgh, was an early June stand, and Bridgeport, Connecticut, former home of Barnum and Bailey, was visited in mid-July. It missed Philadelphia for the first time in years as the Shrine sponsor switched circuses. In all, the 35 week tour covered 8700 miles in eighteen states, playing mostly two and three day dates. Only four one dayers were made.

Reports indicated that business was excellent in Southern towns in the spring, but was down in New England, the result of a depressed economy and opposition from another show which jumped in ahead of Beatty-Cole dates. Nevertheless, the company went in a winner.

New acts included Rex Horton and his bears, the Kiebo clown troupe which did a comedy camel routine, and the Kristovs who did a leap for life, cradle act, juggling and motorcycle act. Among returning talent were Josip Marcan and his cats, the Bale sisters with their liberty horses, Ron and Mitzi Gill in an aerial number, the Flying Gaonas, and Fred Logan with ten elephants. Jimmy James was the ringmaster and James Haverstrom was in charge of the only live band carried by any of the three big tenters.

On the equipment front the company added a new hydraulic canvas spool, a lighting system, a workingmans' sleeper, and three semi-trailers. The trucks were all diesels for the first time. These changes were part of an ongoing program to upgrade the physical plant initiated soon after Pugh and Holwadel took over. Only three trailers were still in use from the Jerry Collins years.

The show assisted in a circus parade sequence in the movie *Avalon*, and was the subject of a documentary on the Fox network. Advance clown Elmo Gibb (nee Dean Chambers) had his finances dissected in *Money* magazine.

Carson and Barnes, headed by D. R. Miller, also had a fair season, apparently somewhat below levels of the late 1980s. Starting off from Paris, Texas on March 24, it played the small towns which were its life's blood in the southwestern, mountain and plains states before going to the Midwest in late June. It headed east in early September, going into territory not usually on its route in Maryland, Virginia,

Beatty-Cole big top from the backyard during the November 8-9 Naples, Florida engagement. Joe Bradbury photo.

North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, then turning west to play through the South and Southwest before going into the barn on November 11. The odometers added a bit over 14,000 miles during the year. The last of the big one night stand circuses, it played only four two day dates, plus five days in Baltimore which were a bust.

Lots of rain and wind hampered the troupe in the spring. The show was caught in a freak flash flood in Houston, Pennsylvania early on the morning of September 7. It lost many concession items and encountered endless equipment problems as a result. Many of the showfolks lost their personal belongings. Miraculously, only two towns were cancelled as the performance went on as scheduled at Cumberland, Maryland on September 9. Photos of the flood made the national news.

Carson and Barnes carried more animals than Noah. The four footed inventory included 22 elephants, a pigmy hippo, a giraffe, a white rhinoceros, lots of lead stock, and about 30 horses and ponies. The giraffe died in Texas in early May, but was soon replaced by another. An effort was made to artificially inseminate one of the elephants with the help of the Portland Zoo's extraordinarily successful breeding program.

The program was similar to previous years with Pat White, cats; Luciana Loyal, pad riding; Donnie Carr, elephants; Israel and Oscar Portugal, high wire; Vital family, archery; and three flying acts, the Padillas, the Poemas, and the Ramirez. Tropical Treasures was the name of the new spec; the Roaring Twenties walkaround was a holdover. Taped music backed up the acts. All this took place under a top approximately 150' by 400' which sat about 3000.

General Manager Jim Judkins' route book was perhaps the finest published by any show since Cole Bros. in 1937. Full of wry, witty comments, and at times hilariously cynical and touchingly poignant remarks, the volume was a fascinating commentary on high grass showmanship in the late 20th century. Near season's end, Pat White announced her retirement after being a fixture in the lion's den for years.

It was a transition year for Circus Vargas. In the first full season since the death of founder Cliff Vargas, owners Jack Bailey and Joe Muscarello routed an extended West Coast tour from January 12 through the end of August, then jumped into the Chicago area where the show remained from early September to mid-October. The trek back to winter quarters in Arizona took the troupe through Iowa, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas, closing in El Paso in late November. A few dates were indoors. Accounts indicate Vargas

Carson and Barnes midway and big top at Cartersville, Georgia on October 16. Joe Bradbury photo.

packed 'em in in the West, but did less well in other regions.

Rumors flew throughout the year that the show was being sold with Kenneth Feld's and Dory Miller's names being most prominently mentioned. The issue was settled about mid-season when Roland Kaiser, the show's concession boss, bought Bailey's share, making Kaiser part of a long and honorable tradition of concessionaires moving up to show ownership.

New equipment included a generator, a Kenworth tractor, a menagerie tent, grease joint trailer, and spec banners. The petting zoo and 19 horses were eliminated along with the semi which transported them, leaving 21 semis to move the show. Animals included ten ponies, eleven horses, a dozen elephants, three camels, two zebra hybrids, and a llama.

Among the performers in the two and a half hour performance were the Olate brothers, dogs; the Mayas, living statues; Wayne Regan, cats; the Quiroga family, high wire; and the Neves and the Rodogels, flying trapeze. Buckles Woodcock headed the elephant department for the first month of the season before leaving after a personnel dispute. Veteran Rex Williams, who was Woodcock's assistant, returned to the top pachyderm job.

Circus Vargas owners Joe Muscarello (l.) and Roland Kaiser during the Chicago run. Sheelagh Jones photo.

The Big Apple Circus, headed by founder Paul Binder, was the Rolls Royce of the industry. It opened its summer tour in Queens in April, moved to Boston for a very successful three and a half weeks for the Children's Museum, then returned to New York for appearances in the other boroughs. The show performed in Chicago from June 13-23 and Columbus from June 26-July 1. Both towns were new territory for Big Apple; reports indicated Chicago was a bust, but Columbus was not so bad. The rest of the summer was spent New England, closing at Shelburne, Vermont on August 5. After starting the winter season near Washington in October, the company went back home to Manhattan for the big Lincoln Center date from October 25 to January 6.

The Grandma Goes West summer theme was virtually the same as the one at Lincoln Center the previous winter. The Loyal-Suarez riders, David Rosaire and his dogs, and trick roper Vince Bruce were among the in-ring talent. Aerialist Pedro Reis was severely injured in a fall in Danbury, Connecticut in early July. He was replaced by Sasha Pavlata for the remainder of the summer tour.

The title of the new winter show was "Ballerinas, Horses and Clowns . . . The Golden Age." The elegant performance was a throw back to the 19th century with most of the performers wearing old-time costumes; in fact, one observer remarked that it was like a Barnum and Bailey poster coming to life. In the presentation Susanna Svenson did a pad riding act and a com-

Big Apple Circus on the lot at Shelbourne, Vermont, August 4. Timothy Tegge photo.

edy riding turn with husband Carlos, Katja Schumann presented liberty horses, David Dimitri had a fascinating comedy low wire act in which he imitated a marionette, Ben and Darlene Williams with their daughters Stormy and Skye presented the elephants Anna May and Ned, the Panteleenko brothers performed an aerial routine, and the Alexis brothers did a hand balancing act. David Casey, John Lepiarz, and Barry Lubin were clowns Oaf, Fish and Grandma. The performance emphasized the strong production values that charactered this circus with great lighting, costumes, and music. Much of the latter was specially written by bandswoman Linda Hudes.

Borrowing heavily from the musical theater, Cirque du Soleil, founded by Guy Laliberte, called its production the Nouvelle Experience. This animaless new waver, which catered to upscale urbanites, was criticized within the profession for not retaining enough traditional elements of the ring to even be called a circus, although in a sense the point was moot as the general public unanimously perceived the performance as such.

It was an expansion year as the company had a second unit in London from July to September under a tent on the Thames, and in Paris' venerable Cirque d'Hiver late in the year. On this continent, the show opened at Montreal, its home town, in May. The American run started in Seattle on July 5, after which it played San Francisco, San Jose, and Santa Monica through mid-December.

A new tent was used for the one ring presentation. The 164' air conditioned round top increased seating to 2500 which allowed the top price at some dates to drop to $29.50. Thirty-four beautifully painted semi-trailers moved the company.

Cirque du Soleil, Canada's new wave show, on the beach at Santa Monica, California. Jerry Cash photo.

The performance included contortion, teeterboard, single trapeze, aerial straps, tightwire, and foot juggling, all integrated into the story line and presented without announcements. While most of the performers were French-Canadians who had gone through the troupe's Ecole National de Cirque in Montreal, the roster also included Russian and Chinese troupers, and an American clown named David Shiner who was apparently the star of the production.

Circus Flora, David Balding's contribution to the arenic world, called its performance "Back to the Bayou II--The Saga Continues." Flora was unique in having its theme run not only through the performance but from season to season, following the adventures of the fictional Baldini circus family in mid-19th century America. The one ring tenter opened in St. Louis in late May for a little over a week. It appeared there again from August 30 to September 9, and followed by a few days each in South Bend, Indiana; Dearborn, Michigan; and Bath, Ohio where the itinerary ended on September 30. The troupe also operated a circus school in St. Louis, its winter quarters town.

Cover of Circus Flora program issued in South Bend, Indiana.

Among the performers on at least the late summer run were the Dancing Gauchos, aerialist Sasha Pavlata, Pickle Family Circus founder and clown Larry Pisoni, and the Suarez-Loyal and Zoppe riding families. The riding turns, one of which featured a ten person bareback act, brought together some of the top equestrian talent in the country and were particularly strong. A bad mishap occurred at Bath on September 30 when Giovanni Zoppe fell during an aerial routine. Only the intercession of Alberto Zoppe, his father, in breaking his fall saved him from even more severe injuries.

A five year old African elephant named McClain filled in for Flora on the late summer dates. The namesake elephant and other show animals were leased at the time to a performance art production called "The Endangered Species Show"

that opened October 2 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. This show, which closed early, was characterized by a critic as a "complex, visually-rich piece that linked the ecological destruction of the earth with the dark, aggressively obsessive drives of human nature," which presumably meant it wasn't a show for kids.

Allan C. Hill's Great American Circus had a five week winter tour in Florida in January and February. The regular season began near Orlando in early March. Working its way up the East Coast, it spent two weeks in April in South Carolina. Most of the summer was spent in New Jersey, New York, and New England. It closed in Florida in mid-November.

The show used a 120' round top with two 30' and one 40' middle sections; it sat about 1500. The midway had two moon bounces, a pony ride, snake show, concession wagon, novelty stand, a petting zoo with 34 goats, and a menagerie with elephant and camel rides. Animals included seven elephants, of which five were Africans; two camels; eight ponies and a horse.

Louise Rosell's four uncaged leopards, Bill Brickle's poodles, Jorge Rosell's funny Ford, the Osario brothers' trampoline and trapeze turns, and Eddie Steeple's chimps and bears were among the acts in the ninety minute presentation. Bill Brickle and Brian LaPalme, who also did magic and fire eating, shared the announcing. Jack Forseen lead the three piece band, and Mike Ridenour headed clown alley. At least one observer noted that the performance and over-all appearance of the show was the best in years.

The Kelly-Miller Circus, headed by David Rawls, was routed north instead of south out of its Hugo winter quarters for the first time. After the March 24 Hugo opening, the show moved into Arkansas, Missouri, and Illinois in April. The summer was spent in the Midwest with most of July in Michigan, most of August in Wisconsin and most of September in Indiana and Illinois. No route information was available after an October 6 Missouri engagement.

The three year old Scola Teloni tent was approximately 100' by 300', and the equipment was carried on thirteen show-owned vehicles. The combined side show and menagerie, under a 90' by 50' top, included three camels, two goats, a llama, a pot bellied pig named Melvin, a tiger and an elephant Side show turns included magic, blade box, fire eating, and Punch and Judy, all presented by Ted Tutwiler.

Acts included Christina Dubsky with her dogs, John Dubsky with four miniature liberty horses, Kurt and Heidi Casady in an aerial cradle routine, and Ken

Entrance to Allen Hill's Great American Circus at Naples, Florida on March 7. Joe Bradbury photo.

Taylor, a Circus Kingdom alumnus, in low wire and single trapeze presentations. Two exceptional acts for a show this size were Josef, Christina and Vanessa Kiss in a fine hand balancing turn, and Terry Fenne with a single elephant act in which the bull, named Nina, did a one foot stand and later turned ninety degrees to do a front foot stand on a plank.

Wayne Franzen's Franzen Bros. Circus did not publish its route making information on its itinerary sketchy. What is known is that the show was in Florida in March, Pennsylvania and New York in May, June, and July, and the Midwest in July through at least September.

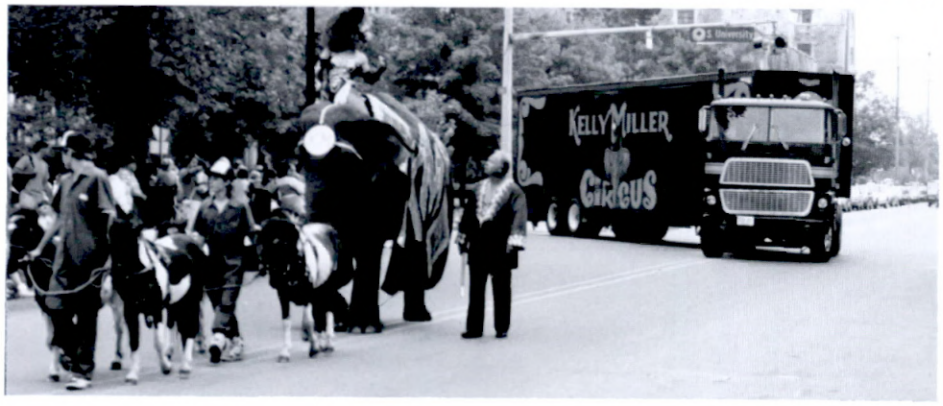
It used a new four pole European style big top from A-1 Tent in Sarasota. The 116' round top was erected for the first time in New York state in June. The midway had a moon bounce, pony ride, concession trailer, novelty stand, three elephants, and a menagerie of lead stock under a top. The company moved behind seven show-owned steering wheels.

Franzen distinguished himself as the only show owner who was a key element of his circus' performance by presenting the cat and elephant turns and assisting in other routines. Other presentations were made by Curtis Cainan, juggling, dogs, and revolving ladder; Paul and Cindy Lee, magic; Tina Brown, ponies; and the Gilbertos, hand balancing. Paul Lee was the ringmaster, and the music was taped.

The Earl family's Roberts Bros. Circus opened at a Florida Air Force base on March 17, and played up the East Coast, reaching Maryland on April 30. After a summer tour of Mid-Atlantic states, Pennsylvania, and New England, it headed back to Florida in September, closing in Brandon on October 20. The equipment was pulled by six show-owned semis.

Among the acts were Chris Schreiber, Lisa the elephant; Yvonne Stephans, dogs, pony and llama; and Brent DeWitt, breakaway bike. Of special note was a rabbit act presented by Bill Schreiber. His charges--named Thumper, Daisy, Eunice and Eddie--did the same routines as seen in dog acts such as climb a ladder, jump a hurdle and through a hoop, and go down a slide. While not confirmed, it appeared that Mr. Bill's Bunnies, as the act was called, were the first performing rabbits on an American circus since a group of the rodents appeared on Al G. Barnes in 1923. Don Gillette opened the year as ringmaster with Phil Chandler taking over the duties into the season. Chandler also did magic in the show. Unlike many

Kelly-Miller paraded in Ann Arbor, Michigan in June. Terry Fenne leads the elephant. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.



Vidbel's Old Tyme Circus on the lot. Paul Gutheil photo.

circuses its size, Roberts used a three piece band rather than recordings.

Vidbel's Old Tyme Circus, a one ringer owned by Al Vidbel, traveled in the East from May to September, with lots of action in New Jersey. Martha's Vineyard, an island off the Massachusetts coast, was a repeat three day stand in August.

Under canvas talent included Susan Vidbel's exotic birds, Jennifer Vidbel's ponies, the Zachary gauchos, Bucky Steele's elephants, and clowns Dime and Connie Wilson. Billy Martin was ringmaster, and Bill Gibson led a three piece band.

John and Betty Reid's Reid Bros. Circus had a two tours. The spring-summer itinerary started at Brookings, Oregon on April 19 and ended at Marshalltown, Minnesota on July 17. In between the mountain and plains states were visited. After playing Boulder, Colorado on September 8, the fall route got into gear with a month long series of Texas badge dates.

The show used a 120' round top with three 50' middle sections. On the first trek the acts included Chris Kilpatrick with cats, Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Donnie Johnson elephants, the Flying Starlings, and the La Martis, living statues. Gibbs was ringmaster, which must have been like hearing Sinatra sing. The fall roster was similar.

Newspaper ad for Reid Bros. Circus which was one of the many shows working under police auspices. Bobby Gibbs collection.

Bobby Gibbs, John "Gopher" Davenport and Ken "Turtle" Benson posed for this photo on Davenport's King-Royal circus in Texas in the fall. Bobby Gibbs photo.

The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus, headed by Robert "Red" Johnson, opened in late February in Arizona where it played through early April. A California tour from April 5 to May 26 followed, after which the show headed east through the mountain and plains states. The annual engagement in Chicago occurred from June 27-July 6, and the rest of the summer and fall was spent in the Midwest and plains states before heading to the Southwest where the tour ended at Payson, Arizona on October 17.

Rain, mud, wind and even a tornado plagued the show in Colorado and Kansas in June. As had been done in past seasons, the troupe played a number of dates at western Air Force bases. The physical plant grew a bit as it took seventeen show and privately owned vehicles to carry the equipment and personnel. The tent, in its second year, sat around 650.

A new addition to the performing roster were Ron Pace and Chris Kennington who as Sugar and Spice did a perch and aerial cradle act. Other acts included Lynn Jacobs, single trapeze; Terrell Jacobs III, bull whip; Heidi Wendany, dogs and dressage riding on Excaliber; Bill Burger, ponies; Jim Zajicek, single elephant. A two person band backed up the acts.

John "Gopher" Davenport's King-Royal Circus didn't leave many tracks from its journeys. Only a handful of verified dates were recorded, but they indicated the show was out from at least from March to November, and appeared in the southwestern, western, and plains states, and the Midwest and South. In late October a second unit was put out under the direction of brother Termite Davenport.

The midway had a number of ding shows operated by Shorty Shears and his wife. Stock included three goats, a mule, a pony, a llama, three lions, three tigers, and the elephants Tommy and Boo. The big top was an 80' round with three 30' middles from Nashville Tent. Among the acts in the hour and a half exhibition were Jack Gobble with the elephants; John Davenport with the cats; the Castellio family in contortion, rola bola, and tight wire routines; and the Rumanians with a teeterboard and slack wire act. Julius Setzer was the announcer.

Bentley Bros. Circus, owned by Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancy, played under auspices at fairgrounds and ball parks (and on occasion, indoors) the three ring troupe conducted two tours. The spring trek covered the Southwest and West while the summer itinerary meandered through the Midwest and East. Acts on the spring roster included Eddie Schmidt, tigers; Diane Moyer, elephants, liberty ponies, and dogs; Jim and Tepa Hall, bears; Constantin troupe, teeterboard; Possos, high wire; and the Castrajons, wheel of death. Jerry Eyestone was the ringmaster, and Kevin King, the band leader. The personnel changed somewhat on the summer tour. Before the season started, Bentley's headquarters moved from California to Florida.

Ray Valentine's Circus Valentine had dates from June 19 to July 8 in Arkansas and Texas, and from October 6-14 in Tex-

Owner Allen Bedford in front of his concession trailer. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

as, both in grandstands and indoors. Performers on the summer engagements included Pierre Spenley and the Zerbini tigers, Christopher James Plunkett on the tight wire, clown Johnny Meah, Billy Barton with his cloud swing, the Possos high wire routine, the Bauer bears, the Reinand chimps, Chip Arthur with the Zerbini elephants, and the Flying Valentines. Peter Sturgis was the ringmaster. At Houston a special feature was Bob Atterbury's rocket car.

Allen Bros. Circus, owned by Allen Bedford, also didn't publish its route; in fact, although it opened on March 17, its whereabouts were unknown before appearing in Pennsylvania in early May. A handful of Midwestern dates were confirmed during the summer, as were ones in Arkansas in August, Kansas in September and Texas in October.

The midway had a pony ride, elephant ride moon bounce, petting zoo, concessions, and the ticket wagon. Among the acts were Earlynn Bedford as Natasha with the cats, Tom Teak with Popcorn the midget horse, and the Aarons duo with a juggling routine. George Rowe was the ringmaster and also did magic as Kalamar. Leon Pinter was the keyboardist for the season's first six weeks, after which taped music was used.

Circus Jaeger, owned by former Big Apple staffer Eric Jaeger, was a new entry. It debuted in its home town of Mound City, Kansas on April 29 and played the plains states, Midwest and East before dying in upstate New York in July. By all accounts the beautiful one ringer, framed on three trucks, deserved a better fate.

The tent was a blue and white European style top from A-1 Tent of Sarasota, 85' in diameter and seating 700. Under it appeared Middy Streeter, clown juggler; Alexander Slaugotnis, Latvian clown; Tanya Herrman, bareback riding, and foot juggling; Linda LaTorres, liberty horses; Mike LaTorres, Stoney the elephant; and Fabrini Bizzarro, single trapeze. Dan Buckley was ringmaster for the first month. The music was recorded.

Another new company was Fisher Bros. Circus, backed by Torchy Townsend and headed by Mel Silverlake, using equipment leased in part from Duke Keller's Wilder Bros. Circus which did not tour in 1990. After opening in Florida in April, the show played southern and border states before going in the barn early. The original plan was to close in Indiana around Labor Day. Silverlake did however take out an indoor Christmas show.

Circus Jaeger on the lot at Mound City, Kansas opening on April 29. Orin King photo.

The midway had a pony ride, moon bounce, Bobby Green's big snake show, a giant guinea pig show, concession stands, and a side show-menagerie with magic and fire eating. The 60' by 90' tent sat approximately 1600. In the one ring presentation Ken Benson and later Unity Whitworth worked Queen Tusk the elephant, Jane Randall had dog and horse routines, and Jackie Brafford did a bird act. Ringmaster Lance Gifford also did magic. For certainly the first time in American circusing, the clown alley was all female.

Pat and Ray Guthrie started their Guthrie Bros. Circus at Duluth, Georgia on May 4. It played the South, border states and Midwest through at least August when route information became nonexistent. It moved on five show-owned

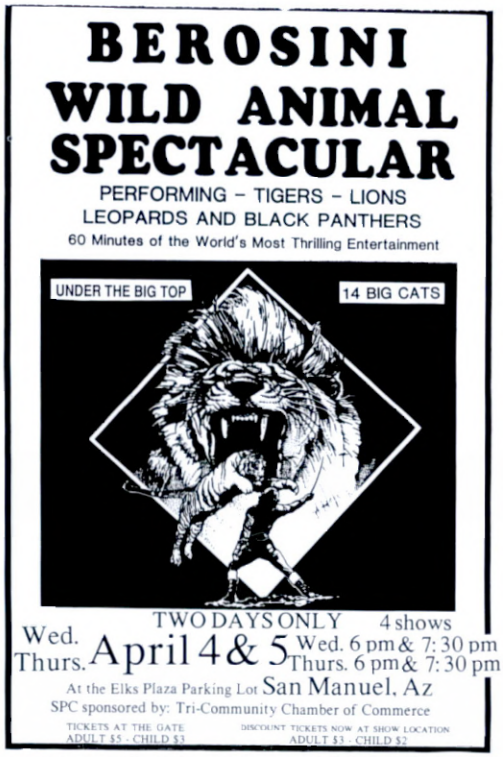
Guthrie Bros. Circus ticket semi in Mechanicsburg, Ohio. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

The Earl family's Roberts Bros. Circus on a lot during the 1990 season. Dave Orr collection.

vehicles, and used a 60' round top with two 30' middles which had been the Toby Tyler Circus menagerie tent.

Among the acts in the two ring performance were Kala Doreen, ladder routine; the Gilbertos, hand balancing and rola bola; Jack Gobble and Tommy the elephant; and Jeff Bruski, birds and trapeze. Some of the personnel went over to the King-Royal Circus after Guthrie closed.

Newspaper advertisement for the Berosini Wild Animal Spectacular at Manuel, Arizona in April. Bobby Gibbs collection.



Buddy Manley was ringmaster at the beginning of the tour. He was replaced by Eddie Sherman later on. As was the norm for shows this size, the music was taped.

Plunkett Bros. Circus from Mabank, Texas had a short summer and fall run, and some spot dates in Texas, using a sidewall and two rings. During the fall tour actors included Billy Barton, cloud swing; Vincent Von Duke, cats; Christopher James Plunkett, slack wire; the Flying Garcias; and Carmen Hall, baboons. Cleo Plunkett was the ringmaster. The Plunkett family spent much of the year performing on other shows, notably with Ray Valentine on his Texas dates.

Bill and Martha Phillips had Phills Bros. Circus in the East from June 1 until September 13. They later had a festival date at Belpre, Ohio of all places which was booked by Ron Bacon. The show lost a week of dates during the summer when the sponsor cancelled at the last minute. Under a 60' by 90' big top, the exhibition included Gary Noel, stilt walking, plate spinning and dogs; and Vickie Howle, foot juggling. Larry Records and his elephant Angel made the first three weeks of the tour; they were replaced by James Clement and his bull Moxie.

David Mobbs' had his Circus USA under canvas in Miami from October 11 to 21. He had a strong line-up with Welde's bears, Phil Schacht and Dondi the elephant, Lilliana Kristensen and her leopards and black panthers, the Zoppe chimps, and the Flying Cortes among the performers.

The Russell Bros. Circus was a new show with an old title. Owned by Jim Hand, the show planned to play the East Coast through November and may well have, but only a March Florida date and an engagement at a Pennsylvania fair on August 30-September 1 saved this one

Three new cages on the Ringling-Barnum blue unit in Atlanta in January. Richard J. Reynolds photo.

from total obscurity in the press. The show used a 60' by 120' big top, and the midway had an elephant ride, a petting zoo with goats, camels, llamas, monkeys, a zebra and exotic birds, a snake show, and a concession and novelty stand. The acts included the Gilbertos, hand balancing; Jimmy Adams, juggling and high wire; and Danny Delmar, unicycle. John Hall, who had the Lewis Bros. Circus out a few years ago, was the contracting agent.

The Berosini Wild Animal Spectacular, owned by Las Vegas based Otto Berosini, was a tenter that received exactly no coverage in the trade and fan press. The only confirmed engagement was a two day stand in April around Tucson, Arizona. Reports on the length of the tour varied, although it was out at least three weeks.

The indoor segment of the industry employed more people than any other, and covered the widest range of population centers. Chances were that if someone saw a circus in 1990 he or she most likely saw it in an arena, auditorium or gymnasium. The nation's largest metropolitan

areas saw Ringling-Barnum and the Moscow Circus; big cities saw Shrine circuses; and small towns saw school shows--all indoors.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's 120th edition, the blue unit, opened at Venice, Florida on December 28, 1989. Working its way north, it hit the New York metropolitan area on March 13 where it appeared at the Meadowlands, Nassau Coliseum, Madison Square Garden, and the Meadowlands again until May 6. Next came three New England dates followed by almost two weeks in Philadelphia. The show then made a huge jump to Tulsa to begin a western swing that included two months in California. After playing the mountain states and the Midwest, the troupe closed in Chicago on November 25.

The train consist included twenty-nine coaches, fourteen flats, a bi-level car and 4 stock cars. The train traveled 1575 miles to get to Tulsa from Philadelphia and another 1262 miles to reach Tucson from Tulsa. In contrast, the other unit's longest jump was 571 miles.

The feature was Flavio Togni, the Italian circus star, who worked a horse and elephant act, a liberty horse routine, a rhino and leopard turn, and the elephant number. While Togni was lauded in the industry for the technical brilliance of his presentations, some observers noted that he lacked the charisma of past Ringling-Barnum stars.

Rhino wagon from the Togni family's Circus Americano on Ringling-Barnum blue unit in Atlanta in January. Richard J. Reynolds photo.

Another feature of the performance was the James Clubb mixed animal act worked by Louis and Marcia Palacio which brought together in one cage one of the most fascinating mixtures of wild animals in many years. Lions, tigers, leopards, bears, hyenas and wolves all saw action in the presentation.

Other acts included the Flying Guttys, the Flying Morales, Johnny Peers' dogs, Los Gauchos Latinos, the hand balancing Wee Gets, the hair hanging Ayalas, and the Quiros high wire act. Jim Ragona was ringmaster. Baboon trainer Carmen Hall left the show during the early March Richmond engagement. In a major break with tradition, clown Greg DeSanto became the first talking clown on a Barnum or Ringling circus since probably the 1880s.

Drawing of Flavio Togni of the Ringling-Barnum Circus.

The Togni family brought over fifteen Asian elephants for their acts. They were augmented by King Tusk (nee Tommy) and two other ex-Diano elephants. The herd worked by Axel Gautier, which had appeared on the blue show for years, worked freelance at special events.

The Ringling-Barnum red unit started its second go-round in Miami on December 28, 1989, generally playing smaller cities, although a number of major cities, such as Washington, Houston, Dallas, Boston, St. Louis, and Detroit, were on the route. The show played in Texas from June 29 until August 19 which was soon after the annual lay over in Louisville from May 29 to June 10.

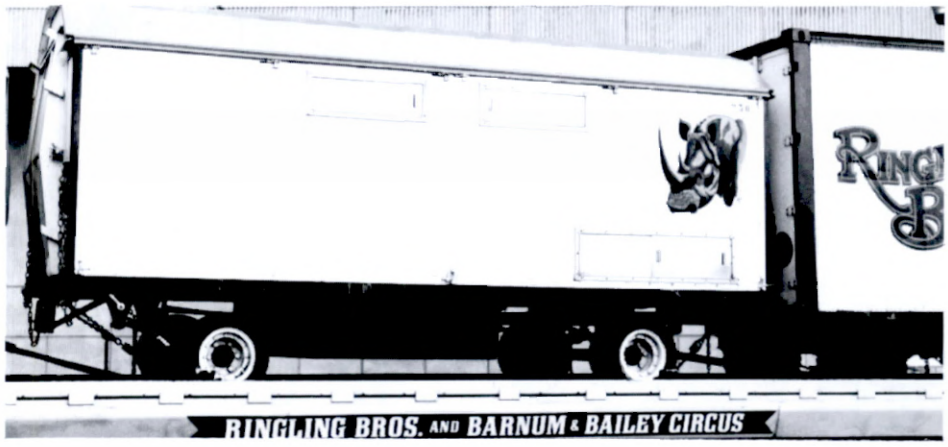
Gunther Gebel-Williams, in his last hurrah, was the star of the show. An era ended when he turned his boots over to his

Side by side newspaper ads for both Ringling-Barnum units appeared in the Panama City, Florida *News Herald* on January 7.

son Mark Oliver after his final performance at Pittsburgh on the evening of November 18. Only a few performers were headliners as long as Gebel-Williams, and fewer still achieved his level of name recognition with the general public. He was virtually unique in retiring near the top of his form, the historic norm for greats being to work in lesser capacities after the skills that brought stardom had eroded. He and Clyde Beatty will be remembered as the two sawdust giants of 20th century America, and his retirement was a great loss to the industry and to the general public. He was the best.

Other performers included the Carrillo brothers, high wire; the Flying Alejandros; the Flying Lunas; the Pivarals, living statues; the Ayak brothers, stationary trapeze; and the Royal Canadian Aerial Ski Squadron.

Rumors circulated throughout the year that both units' grosses were way down, and that the organization was experiencing severe financial problems. While some of the wilder stories--that only one unit would tour in 1991 for example--were ludicrous, it did appear that



Program of the Moscow Circus Crane unit during the 1990 tour.

box office returns had dipped, although not catastrophically, and that some cost cutting measures were implemented including lay-offs. Among the departed at year's end were long time staffers Bob MacDougall, Frosty Little, and Charly Baumann.

In other Ringling-related news, Siegfried and Roy's opening at the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas was delayed until February 1. They received a five year, $57.5 million contract and from all accounts were well on their way to justifying it. Neil Carter was the guest host of the annual television broadcast of the blue show from St. Petersburg. Gunther Gebel-Williams and some of the red unit's elephants were featured during the half time show at the Orange Bowl in Miami on New Year's Day. Late in December the Ringling organization and Abe Pollin ended a sixteen year feud when the show reached agreement with Pollin's Centre Management to play the Baltimore Arena starting in 1993.

The company reached into new areas when it announced it was setting up a camp in Smithfield, Maine to teach children circus skills. This venture was to begin in the summer of 1991. More significantly, three Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey retail stores opened, the first in Fairfax, Virginia. Averaging about 4000 square feet, they sold circus themed apparel and gift and party items. Both these moves were a reflection of president Kenneth Feld's relentless entrepreneurial spirit. A March *Time* magazine article estimated that all his businesses, mainly the circuses and ice shows, grossed $250 million a year, a figure undreamed of, even accounting for inflation, by John Ringling or P. T. Barnum.

The Moscow Circus, master minded by Steven Leber, was another big time, big city indoor show, in many cases playing the same cities and same venues as Ringling-Barnum. Observers differed on the extent to which the show was eating into Big Bertha's audience, although all agreed it had some impact. In any case, it appeared the show was fast becoming a fixture on the American circus scene.

Like Ringling-Barnum, there were two Moscow circuses, loosely referred to as the Hertz unit and the Crane unit, after the flying acts on each troupe. The Hertz show played across the country, from New York to Chicago to San Francisco before closing near Cleveland on May 13. Features included the Doveyko family on teeterboard; Sarwat Begbudi, a horseback riding juggler; Ibragimov's bears, and the Tamerlan Nugzarov Cossack riders. The electrifying Alexander Hertz flying act used catapult cradles in place of platforms on each side of a fixed aerial cradle in the middle.

The Crane unit opened in Houston in late November 1989, and appeared under a tent at the Bally Hotel in Las Vegas from January 12 to February 4. A February 7 to April 1 run at Bally's in Reno followed. Atlantic City saw it for most of July. Dates in Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Houston, Detroit, Baltimore and Orlando filled the schedule through November 25. After a month's lay off it hurrahed again, starting in Seattle on December 27.

Acts included bears, teeterboard, Cossack riding, wire walking, and musical clowns. The Flying Cranes were extraordinary. Symbolizing Russian war dead, the unbelievably dramatic spectacle, which incorporated elements of ballet and was backed by the music of Wagner and Tchaikovsky, often brought audiences to tears, and almost always to standing ovations. One knowledgeable observer called it the finest single circus act ever. The nine fliers technical brilliance was obscured by the incredible emotional pull of the routine, a telling indication of the act's greatness. Indeed, it was the only flying act in the world to do an unannounced quadruple. In the cover story of the December 30 *New York Times Magazine*, the act's creator and catcher Vilen Golovko disclosed that the Cranes were practicing a quintuple somersault. Perfection may have not yet peaked.

Although the technical excellence of the Moscow Circus acts was always acknowledged, a number of critics, both in and out of the industry, noted a lack of cohesiveness and solid production values which would have enhanced the overall presentation; it was just one high powered act after another. Further, some venues were inappropriate settings of the show. At New York's Radio City Music Hall, for example, much of the excitement of the Cossack riders was missed by a large portion of the audience which couldn't see part of the act because of the stage being higher than their seats. Nevertheless, both companies enriched and enlivened the American circus scene.

No circus season would be complete without the obligatory defection by a performer from a communist country. In 1990 the duty fell to Sergei Uhanov, a clown on the Crane unit, who left the show in Reno in early April, surfacing in San Francisco where he sought political asylum. He later appeared with the Pickle Family Circus.

Circuses sponsored by Shrine temples and other fraternal and charitable groups, notably police and fire fighter organizations, were a major segment of the business. While the generic title "Shrine Circus" obscured the public's ability to differentiate between the shows of different producers and hindered the development of name recognition of their show, many of the circuses produced by Shrines were of high quality, featuring many acts which had starred on Ringling-Barnum, Big Apple and major European shows. Others filled their seats as a result of their member's or the hired phone crew's abil-

Nellie Hanneford was one of the riding stars on the Royal Hanneford circus. Struppi Hanneford collection.

ity to sell tickets rather than the performance's merits.

Tommy and Struppi Hanneford's Royal Hanneford Circus had two units and forty-seven Shrine dates during the year. Major Shrine contracts included temples in Dallas, Houston, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Columbus, and Philadelphia. The latter was a new booking that had long been a lock for Beatty-Cole. The show played a number of other sponsored dates, both indoors and under canvas, and some fairs including the big Eastern States Exposition at Springfield, Massachusetts in September. For the third consecutive year it was the circus at Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade in July. Hanneford played Charleston, South Carolina under canvas from February 23-25 after Hurricane Hugo had destroyed the local auditorium. While the date was taken with some trepidation, the engagement was a smash with four turnaways and an extra show.

The red unit opened in Flint, Michigan on January 13 with the Mark Karoly riders, Dick Kohlriser and his dogs, the Tangier Arab tumblers, the Flying Rodriguez, and the Hanneford and Woodcock elephants. The singing ringmasters were Todd and Charlie Hackett, and Kay Parker directed the band. Wire walker Alain Zerbini broke both heels in a fall during the run.

Green unit talent at Dallas in late March and early April included Wendy Plunkett on roman rings, Vincent Von Duke with cats, Ron and Joy Holiday with their Cat Dancer routine, Susanna and Carlos Svenson in comedy riding, the Flying Ibarras, Robin Valcencia with a cannon act, and elephants owned by Mike

The Royal Hanneford Circus put up lots of paper for its February tented date in Charleston, South Carolina. Dave Orr photo.

La Torres, and the Plunkett and Woodcock families. Al Leonard and Patti Wendt shared the announcing duties. The spec on both shows was a tribute to the 300th anniversary of the Hanneford Circus.

Tommy Hanneford made a special appearance in Mark Karoly's comedy riding act in Milwaukee. During the same performance, in front of hundreds of CFA members, he graciously introduced his cousin Ernestine Clarke Baer from the ring. Also in Milwaukee, a former Kane Fernandez tent was raised under the Hanneford banner for the first time.

Tarzan Zerbini and Joe Bauer were also major players in the Shrine circus business with two Tarzan Zerbini Circuses on tour at some points, and at one time three. The gold unit opened at Ft. Wayne in February and after a number of other stateside Shrine dates, headed north, playing under canvas across Canada--from Nova Scotia to British Columbia--from May 4 to September 16. American Shrine dates followed with the troupe going in the barn after appearing at Miami, Oklahoma on November 3. The blue unit played mostly in the American and Canadian west from early March to early May, appeared at some Illinois fairs in June, and had engagements in New Mexico and Texas to close the year in late September. The red unit's route card consisted of only a single entry, but it was a big one, the Detroit Shrine.

Acts on the gold unit included Daniel Suskow with an eight tiger display, Susan Sheryll and her Afghans, Sylvia Zerbini on the single trapeze, Davide Zoppe with his monkeys, newcomer Don Otto on comedy trampoline, the Flying Montoyas, clowns Tim and Gigi Tegge, and the Bauer elephants. Joseph Dominick Bauer was the ringmaster.

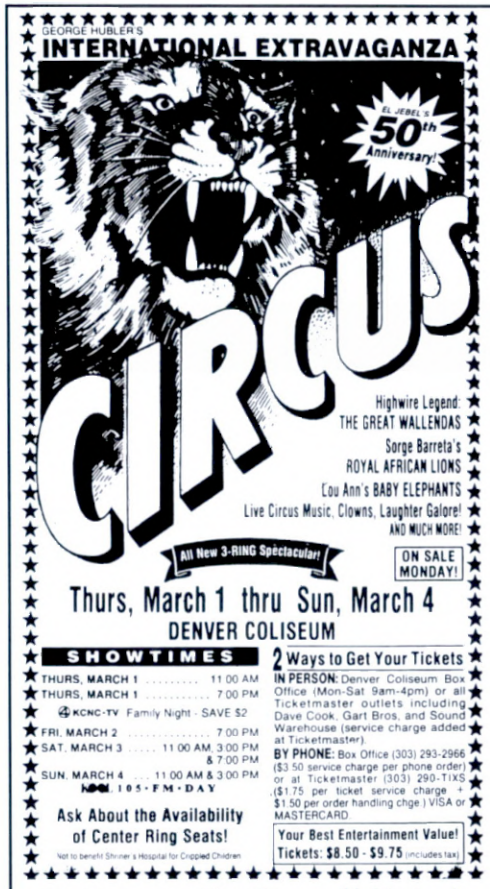
Among the in-ring talent on the blue show when it played Portland in March were the Flying Garcias, the Esqueda teeterboard troupe, Luis Munoz on the low wire, the Bucky Steele elephants, and the Nock sway poles. Austin Miles was the ringmaster. Both troupes experienced a turnover in acts as the performance expanded and contracted depending on the size of the date and the need for personnel on other units.

The seventeen day Detroit Shrine remained the continent's premier contract, although reports indicated business was down from previous years. The date was big business for the Moslem Temple as it had a string of satellite dates in Michigan soon after the long Motor City run ended. Among the acts were the Flying Farfans, the Steele and Bauer bear acts, juggler and unicyclist T. J. Howell, aerialist Billy Barton, trapezist Sylvia Zerbini, tiger trainer Daniel Suskow, the Loyal-Suarez riders, and the King Charles comedy unicycle troupe. Joseph Dominick Bauer was the ringmaster and also worked his space wheel.

George Carden was another showman with two units. He produced a number of Shrine dates including Madison, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, and Vancouver. He also had other sponsored and fair dates, appearing under canvas at times, and often using the Circus Vegas title.

At Vancouver in early March the acts included the Fornasari family motorcycle and flying acts, Bruno Blaszak's tigers, rola bolaist Kerry Brown, Chief Silver Eagle and Cody the buffalo, and Katinka's

The Tarzan Zerbini Circus appeared under this European top in Ottawa on August 10. Timothy Tegge photo.



Newspaper ad for George Hubler's circus for Denver Shrine in March. The ad was something of an oddity in that the producer's name and some of the personnel were mentioned. Warren Wood collection.

poodles. Paul Niebauer was the announcer.

During a spring run in Canada the show used Jordon's globe of death, Patricia Zerbini's tigers, Antar and Beverly Wazzan with a comedy ladder, Carol Stebbing on the trapeze, Andre Schweitzer on the tightwire, illusionists Ramon and Naida Esqueda, and three Carden elephants. Ree Schweitzer was the ringmistress.

The Jordan International Circus, headed by Johnny Jordan, had medium size Shrine dates in arenas and grandstands, mostly in the West and Southwest, although it occasionally appeared in other sections of the country. One of those was Syracuse where the performers included the Poema family in a combination teeterboard and risley routine, Boyd Kimes and his porkchop revue, four Carden elephants presented by David Hall and Tammy Wallenda, and a Dave Smith cannon act. Tammy Wallenda also worked five mixed cats as Tamara. David Maas was announcer. Jennie Ann Borsetti died after falling when the trapeze used in her aerial motorcycle act broke on May 11 at El Paso. Jorge Del Moral Jr., her partner, also fell. Although suffering several broken bones, he survived.

George Hubler, Dayton, Ohio's gift to showmanship, had his Hubler International Circus at a number of Shrine and other sponsored dates, sometimes under canvas, from January to October. For a short time in June he had two units out. At the Denver Shrine 50th anniversary show in March the acts included Jorge Barreda, cats; Billy Barton, cloud swing; the Flying Ibarras; the Wainwrights, living statues; the Great Wallendas, high wire; Lou Ann Jacobs, elephants; and the Centrons, aerial motorcycle. Patti Wendt was the singing ringmistress, and Bill Browning was in charge of the band. At other engagements Hubler used such talent as the George Hanneford elephants, Vincent Von Duke's cats, the Flying Poemas, and Sharon Vidbel's huskies.

George Coronas' circus had 150 days of Shrine dates in the spring and fall, and fairs in the summer. Like many other producers he had two troupes out at times, and also had some under canvas engagements. Chicago, Atlanta, and Ft. Worth were his big time fez dates. In late October, he bought the former Toby Tyler winter quarters in Sarasota.

The Chicago Shrine date of eighteen days was the year's longest. Sawdust personnel included the Vachinez family, teeterboard; Manual Goncalvez, rola bola; Scott family, unridable mule and dogs; the Zoppe chimps; the Flying Gaonas; Gilda Cristiani, leopards; the Coronas elephants; and Los Gauchos Argentino. Col. Lucky Larabee was ringmaster, and Rick Percy was band leader.

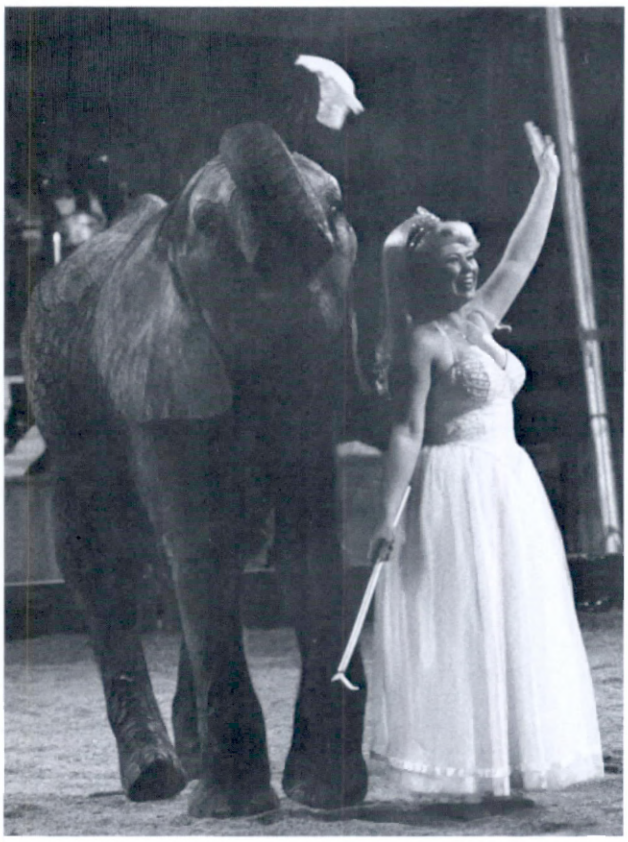
Among Gilda and Lucio Cristiani's charges was the first performing snow leopard in American field show history, and only the eighth ever to appear in a circus anywhere. Acquired from animal dealer Frank Thompson, the young male, named Juno, debuted in Chicago. The only other attempt to present a snow leopard in this country occurred in 1940 when Alfred Court had one in his act on Ringling-Barnum. Tragically, it was killed by another leopard in the act during dress rehearsal at Madison Square Garden, and never made a public appearance. Coincidentally, Lucio Cristiani, then the world's greatest bareback rider, was on Ringling-Barnum when Court's leopard died.

Serge Coronas, George's brother, also had some Shrine contracts and a run of fairs in the summer. At the Columbus, Georgia Shrine engagement in September the presentation included Mike Donoho with his wheel of destiny, Ron and Joy Holiday in their Cat Dancers routine, the Gauchos Argentino, the Flying Poemas, Mike LaTorres with his elephant Jenny, and the Scott family with their mule and dog acts. Ernie McLean was the announcer, and Mike Pike led a six piece band.

Patricia Gatti's Circus Gatti had sponsored dates, some of them for the Shrine but most for police and fire groups, throughout the West starting in early February, playing both indoor and outdoor arenas. Among the performers were John Pelton with the Donnie Johnson tigers, Eric Braun with his dogs, Joe Lemke's chimps, the Flying Pages, the Flying Leals, the Great Theron on the sway pole, and Tommy Donoho with the Gatti elephants. Bob Welz was the ringmaster.

The Hamid-Morton Circus, which traced its origins back to Bob Morton and

Kay Rosaire was one of the best known independent cat trainers. She worked for many producers in 1990. Dave Orr collection.



Lou Ann Jacobs and her elephants appeared at a number of Shrine circuses and spent the summer at the Circus World Museum where this photo. Greg Parkinson photo.

George Hamid, was the longest lived show doing Shrine, fair and other dates. It had its usual run of temple appearances starting with Roanoke, Virginia on February 2. The exhibition there included the Flying Edmundos; Julius Von Uhl, cats; Arthur Duchek, comedy high wire; and the Anastasini brothers, risley. The ringmaster was Earl Michaels.

In May the company provided the acts for the Three Rivers Circus and Carnival at the baseball park in Pittsburgh. The performance featured aerial numbers including a Eugene Nock helicopter routine, and John and Henry Lemoine with their motorcycle high wire turn.

Hugo Zacchini, taking over from his late brother Eddie, had his Olympic International Circus at the Florida State Fair in Tampa from February 7-18 before beginning a series of Shrine obligations. Appearing under a rented Harold Barnes tent in Tampa, the performance included Eric Adams, dogs; Garcia duo, cradle; the Franciscos, teeterboard; Dime and Connie Wilson, clowns; the Flying Cortez; and Phil and Francine Schacht with their elephant Dondi. Bill Boren was the singing ringmaster for the one hour show. When Zacchini wasn't producing circuses, he performed his well known human cannonball act. Bookings for his single act included Milwaukee where he also drove his cannon in the Great Circus Parade.

Ian Garden's Garden Bros. Circus had Shrine and other dates from February to May and from late July through mid-September. With the exception of March fez stands in Allentown and Reading, Pennsylvania all his circusing was in eastern Canada. In the fall he took a thrill show to Bermuda.

At Toronto in late February the two and a half hour performance featured Trudy Strong and the Hawthorn cats; Yuri Krasnov, hand balancing; the flying Valencias; Fossett's chimps and gorilla parody; Roy Wells and five John Cueno elephants; and the Urias globe of death. Peter Sturgis was ringmaster, and Charles Schlarbaum had an eighteen, count 'em, piece band.

Ed Migley had his usual Circus Odyssey Shrine bookings in the East starting with Rochester, New York on February 14. In May he took the troupe to Puerto Rico for three weeks, and in November was reported to have taken a show to Mexico. Among the sawdust talent at the Buffalo Shrine in March were John Welde's bears, Andre Serengetti's lions, Jim Arnberg's dogs, aerialist Jacqueline Zerbini, the Flying Redpaths, the Flying Valentines, and a Dave Smith cannon. David Locke was ringmaster. The troupe worked as Circus America at Buffalo and did great business.

Ron Kelroy had Shrine dates in Tucson, Louisville and other towns in the spring, and made his usual appearance at Milwaukee's Summerfest around mid-year. Acts on the early season run included Franconi duo, double trapeze; Charles and the Lady, magic; the Flying Espanas; Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Donnie Johnson elephants, and a Dave Smith cannon. Mike Pike was in charge of the musicians.

Grace McIntosh's M & M Circus had its Mid-America Shrine tour in the Midwest and the plains states from April to June., and later had at least one Missouri Shrine date in August. In mid-April two units operated for a brief period. Among the performers at Lincoln, Nebraska in April were Jorge Barreda, lions; the Muellers and the Bannisters, aerial cradle; the Flying Cerces; Les Reinands, chimps; Lou Ann Jacobs, elephants; Enrico and Debbie Wallenda, high wire; and Rebecca Smith, cannon. Kent Clayton was ringmaster and William "Boom Boom" Browning was bandmaster.

Wayne McCary had his Maine Shrine stands in April and May. The Flying Espanas, the Wainwright's Marble in Motion living statute act, Jacqueline Marsolais on the single trapeze, the Rix bear and high school horse act, and the Bill Morris elephants were on the roster. Charles Van Buskirk introduced them all.

Bob Snowden worked in Manchester and other New Hampshire towns for the Shrine in April. Among the personnel were the Rix bears, the Wainwright living statues, Tino Wallenda on the high wire, and Billy Barton with his cloud swing. He took a circus to Venezuela in mid-December which reportedly didn't do well. The Flying Ibarras, the Wainwrights, aerialists Sugar and Spice, and Cueno tiger and elephant acts made the trek.

Ernie McLean had some Kentucky Shrine dates in the spring, possibly using the Clark Bros. title, that didn't spill any ink in the trade and fan press. One report indicated his schedule was somewhat curtailed in 1990 as Ron Kelroy worked some of the towns he had had in the past. McLean was ringmaster on Serge Coronas and Kelroy bookings at other times during the year.

Donnie Johnson's Clyde Bros. Circus had a few Iowa Shrine contracts as well as the one for Las Cruces, New Mexico in September. David Maas was ringmaster in New Mexico. Johnson had his elephant

Rolling stock of the Great Wallenda Circus. Enrico Wallenda photo.

and tiger acts on other shows during the year.

The Great Wallenda Circus was a newcomer to Shrine circusing with two dates in North Carolina in early October. Talent was provided by Lilliana Kristensen and her panthers and leopards, Scott's comedy mule and dogs, the Flying Ibarras, Rietta Wallenda on the swaypole, and producers Enrico and Debbie Wallenda on the high wire. The Oasis Temple sponsored circuses in several North Carolina towns, booking the Wallenda show to work two and Royal Hanneford the rest. In what must have been a circus first, the Shrine's souvenir program contained the performance listing and information for both troupes.

The Wallenda Circus also appeared in Spartanburg, South Carolina on October 20. Performers included Jorge Barreda and his lions, Lou Ann Jacobs and her elephants, clown Al Barclay, the Wainwright living statutes, and of course the Great Wallendas on the high wire.

The Wallendas also worked a number of parks and festivals as a single attraction in which they performed swaypole and high wire between which a lecture was given on the history of the Wallenda family. One such engagement was at Ironworld USA, a Chisholm, Minnesota theme park. In September a malfunctioning washer-dryer caused a fire which destroyed their costumes, music, her Pegasus aerial rigging, and the truck which carried it all.

The Kaye Continental Circus, produced by Paul Kaye, worked its traditional Evansville, Indiana Shrine engagement from November 22-25. Acts included Doug Terranova with the Donnie Johnson tigers, David Rosaire's dogs, the Zoppe's chimps, the Hans Winn family's wheel of death and swaypole, the Flying Poemas, the Guerrero family on the wire high, and all fourteen Hawthorn elephants. Philip McDonald was the announcer, and Jack Cervone directed the band. Bill Hall, of "Tanbark Topics" fame, produced the Wilmington, Delaware Shrine Circus in late May with Baron Julius Von Uhl's cats, the George Coronas elephants, and the juggling and teeterboarding Lang family. Bill Browning was bandmaster.

A number of circuses found their niche playing fairs and festivals, often as free shows booked by carnivals or by the fairs themselves to attract patrons to the midway. These were generally small shows, usually one ring, which gave about an hour long presentation under canvas or in front of a grandstand. While many indoor producers booked fairs during the slack summer Shrine season, a few other companies specialized in this brand of big topping.

Ringmaster in front of the one ring Liebel Family Circus. Dale Haynes photo.

The Liebel Family Circus from Davenport, Florida, played fairs in the Midwest, East and South from late March through mid-November. The equipment moved on two large panel trucks and two trailers. The midway had pony and elephant rides. The tent was a 100' European style round top which sat about 500. At Hilliard, Ohio in July the Liebel, Birchfield and Luna families put on the entire performance, everyone doubling. For example, owner Tomi Liebel did his one man band routine and juggled.

The George Hanneford Circus performed at fairs in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Under a two pole big top at the Canton, Ohio fair in late summer the actors included George Hanneford III, riding; Fabrini Bizzarro, single trapeze; Drougette's dogs; and the George Hanneford elephants. During much of the year wife Vicki Hanneford ran a circus at the Thunderbird Swap Shop, a giant flea market, in Fort Lauderdale. At various times Vincent Von Duke's tigers, the Urias motorcycle globe act, and the Winn's wheel of destiny worked this one. In a tragic note, an elephant handler was killed by one of his charges there.

Peggy Klein Kaltenbach of Palatine, Illinois had a number of small town fairs and other dates in the Midwest and East during the spring and summer, sometimes using the Circus Continental title. At Berrian Springs, Michigan in August she booked Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Donnie Johnson elephants, wire walker Herbie Weber, Alex Sebastian with his dogs, and foot juggler Barbara Van Voorden. Rick Legg was the announcer, and Don "Whizzer" Bridwell was producing clown.

Dave Twomey's Happytime Circus' 25th year was not a happy anniversary as a fire in his truck destroyed his dogs and equipment, including the tent. Soon after, a new big top was purchased from Anchor. He nevertheless had some California fairs, and also worked the Alaska State Fair.

John Winn's Europorama Circus also celebrated its 25th season. A grandstand show playing the Pacific Northwest in the spring and early summer, it used the Flying Garcias, and Ken Drake's elephants which were the former Murray Hill herd.

John Robinson's Famous American Circus, headed by Jerry and Sherry Soderquist, had festival dates in Florida in the spring. Erik and Bobbi Adams' dogs, Bill and Donna Bannister with chimp and perch acts, Jan and Chuck Hutinger with unicycle and juggling routines, and Heidi Herriott with a miniature horse were among the presentations. A new entry was Circus Sahara which played fairs in the South, East, and New England. Among the personnel were DuBois duo, cradle; Marie France, dogs; and Victoria Lee, foot juggling. Owner Dorian Blake performed magic in the show.

Carla Wallenda had her little circus at fairs in the Midwest, East and South from July through October. Jorge Barreda produced the circus at the Mississippi State Fair. The Hans Winn Thrill Circus was at the Kentucky State Fair with high wire, aerial motorcycle, and sway pole presentations. Wini McKay, Chester Cable, and Bill Hollingshead produced the Old Fashioned American Circus at the Los Angeles County Fair from mid-August until September 7. The one ringer used an 80' by 120' square end big top which sat 1500. Acts included Manuel and Jill Goncalves, rola bola and sword balancing; Chester Cable, foot juggling; Bobby Moore, dogs; Kathleen Kaufman, single trapeze; and Gary and Kari Johnson, elephants. Shiela Winn was ringmistress, and the music was taped.

The Farnum Bros. Circus apparently had some California fair dates, although it received no mention in industry publications. Andy Swan's Swan Bros. Circus, a two man circus, performed at California fairs from May to October. The Backyard Circus used a 20' by 40' tent in which children were taught rudimentary circus skills at fairs and festivals. This attraction had six units which were franchised by Michael Searle. A similar operation was called A Neighborhood Circus.

Frisco Bros. Circus and Petting Zoo appeared at the Waco, Texas fair from September 28-October 6 where owner Joe Frisco worked a single elephant act, Jenny Frisco had a mixed animal act with llamas and goats, and Jasmine and Didier Giraldo did a cradle routine. Other petting zoos, the heirs to the great animal exhibitions of the early 19th century, were owned by Robert W. Commerford, Joe Hedricks, Fred Wynn, Bob Jones, Dave Hale, and others. Commerford had elephants, camels, zebras, a giraffe, and a variety of small animals at the New York State Fair ground in January.

Other circus related activities on fairgrounds included the Rix family bear show which appeared as a single attraction at many such events. A number of showfolks, Ken Benson for one, found work for varying lengths of time with the many pig racing companies which were immensely popular. Many single acts, particularly those of an aerial and thrill nature, earned paychecks on exhibition grounds and at celebrations. A few sideshows, notably the one owned by Ward Hall and Christ Christ, continued that grand midway tradition.

A raft of small, mostly one ring shows played indoor dates, usually functioning as a fund raising vehicle for charities, such as PTA's and PTO's, which were unable to contract with larger troupes. Often called "school shows" because of their proclivity to perform in school auditoriums and gyms, these aggregations usually toured from October to May, and generally played smaller communities. They were the spiritual descendents of the small wagon circuses and hall shows that catered to small town audiences in the 1890s. While employing only a small percentage of the personnel in the industry, it was a growing and seemingly healthy segment of the business.

Big John Strong was the Barnum of the school shows with at least two units on tour through most of the year with one report indicating he had four units out for a short period. Playing from California to the Midwest and in Canada, his troupes used a variety of titles, such as Clown Capades of Magic, Children's Variety Show and Santa's Christmas Show. In-ring talent included Richard Oresto, foot juggling and juggling; Gary Holveck, magic; Eddie Steeples, bears; and Bob and Dixie Seaton, dogs and hand balancing.

Alberto Zoppe's Circus Europa appeared in a number of theaters. Al House collection.

Ron Bacon had his Famous Cole Circus in gyms and armories in the Ohio Valley during spring and fall tours. Personnel on the spring route included clowns Skin and Bones, juggler and teeterboardist Shane Hanson, Irving Hall with his unicycle and baboon acts, and the roller skating Rolling Diamonds. Dick Johnson was the show manager and also did a magic routine in the performance.

The Cole All Star Circus opened at Salamanca, New York on January 5 for its usual winter run in that state. Acts included Phil Chandler, magic; Fernando and Irene Bautista, juggling; Mike Snyder, clown; and Dora Bautista, contortion. Owner Billy Martin did his gorilla parody routine. Jose Cole's Circus had its normal spring and fall tours in the upper Midwest. In the spring Herbie Weber worked on the slack wire and Tom Demry had his animals.

Little information was available on Jim Nordmark's International All Star Circus, sometimes called Kristy Bros. The season apparently started in February and closed in September. At Syracuse on May 30 the acts included Bela Tabak with magic and a trained peacock routine, plate spinner Dusty Sadler, Joanne Wilson with the African elephant Baby Suzie, George Bertini on the unicycle and the tight wire, Belinda Harper in her hula hoop turn, and Dale Wiseman with a mixed animal presentation which entailed a monkey, goat, poodle, pot bellied pig, skunk, macaw, two house cats, two pigeons, fox, chicken and a raccoon. Leigh Ketcham was the show manager. While details were murky, it appeared Nordmark also booked Harry Dubsky's Circus Galaxy, another school show, for part of the year.

Ray MacMahon's Royal American Circus had a spring run in the South, and a September 21-October 17 string in Kansas, Arkansas and Mississippi. On the fall dates the Robert Zerbini family had dog, trapeze and comedy sliding table acts, and David and Sissy Conners performed unicycle, teeterboard and juggling routines.

The American Showtime Circus, owned by Tommy Lunsford, had spring and fall routes in the South, the latter lasting three months. John and Angela Stebbings with their poodles, Bobby and Sonya Fairchild with their whip and knife routine, James Clement with his elephant Moxie, and clown Jim Ridenour were on the spring bill. Manager Stu Miller also performed illusions. Duke Keller was concession manager in the fall. Mike Naughton's Yankee Doodle Circus was in New York and New England schools in the spring.

Showtime USA from Wellington, Ohio had spring and fall indoor dates in the Midwest, particularly Ohio. On the fall run T. J. Howell juggled and owner Rick Legg performed as Kelmar the magician. The Wonderland Circus appeared in South Carolina schools from January 29 to February 23. Ramon Espana, balancing and rola bola; Paul Dean, clown; Josephine and Jacqueline Brafford, hair hang, juggling and doves; and Harry and Amy Mueller, cradle and trapeze were among the performers. Owner Bill Brickle was ringmaster and worked his dog act.

Sid Kellner's Great London Circus marched in California for short periods in the late spring and late fall. On the November run were wire walker Herbie Weber, foot juggler Chester Cable, magicians Charles and the Lady, puppeteer Ray Grant, and dog trainer Bobby Moore. The Gary Strong Circus had some summer dates, and a November 30-December 7 run in Louisiana. On the winter tour the Conners family with juggling and unicycle routines, Ed Steeples' bears, the Schreiber family on rolling globes and with trained rabbits helped provide the entertainment. Phil Chandler was ringmaster. Ron Morris had a series of dates from October 13 to November 23 from Colorado to Tennessee.

Circus Fantasy began its inaugural season with one dayers in West Virginia from March 25 to April 7, and a fall run

from mid-October to early December. Acts on the second tour included the Lang family with juggling and teeterboard routines, Yvonne Stephens with her trained llama and dog acts, and Kevin Haines on the low wire. Owner Byron Bowman, a former rider with the Royal Lipizzan Show who had toured his own magic show for seven years, was the ringmaster. Sponsoring the spring run was a retarded citizens group; in the fall, it was a missing and abused children organization.

Sparling Bros. Circus, produced by George Garden of the famous Canadian circus family, had five weeks in Ontario in the spring playing mostly hockey rinks. The program included Super Dave Knoderer with his high school horse Souveran and his comedy mule act, Albert and Jeanette Rix's bears, hand balancer Pedro Morales, Phil and Francine Schacht with Dondi the elephant, and the Sensational Leighs on a space wheel. Gail Jamieson was the ringmistress. Al Stencell, a fixture on the Canadian indoor scene for years, kept his Century All Star Circus in the barn to research a history of the carnival business in the Dominion.

Marc Verreault had his Cirque Universale in Eastern Canada in the spring. Among the features were Mike Clark's cats, Bill Morris' elephants, a Dave Smith cannon, Jack Cook's comedy car, and Victor Flores on the high wire. Pierre Jean was ringmaster. Verreault also had a tented show called Cirque des Etoiles in Quebec from late June to September. Connie Welde's jaguars and leopards, Tom Demry's elephant and ponies, Jean Marc St. Jules on rola bola and juggling, and the Arias balancing act were on the bill.

G. B. Walten's Variety Circus appeared in a school gym at Louisville, Ohio and presumably other towns near year's end with Mickey Dee in a duck act, magician Paul Lee, and Curtis Cainan with his pigs. Periwinkle's Variety Show, owned by Chuck and Bambi Burnes, had what appeared to be spot dates in California in the summer and in December, and a Midwest and Southwest run in December. At Fort Worth on December 21 performers included the Erin duo, juggling; David Hira, vent; Willy Waltens and company, hand balancing; and Cathy Garcia, aerial act. Burnes was ringmaster. He also produced the Burnes Bros. International Circus at the Lancaster, California fairgrounds on July 4 and perhaps other days. Acts included the Flying Farfans on the Russian swing; Chester Cable, foot juggling; Cherl Shawver's elephant; the Jordan sisters, wheel of death; and Sylvester and Barbara Braun, whips and roping.

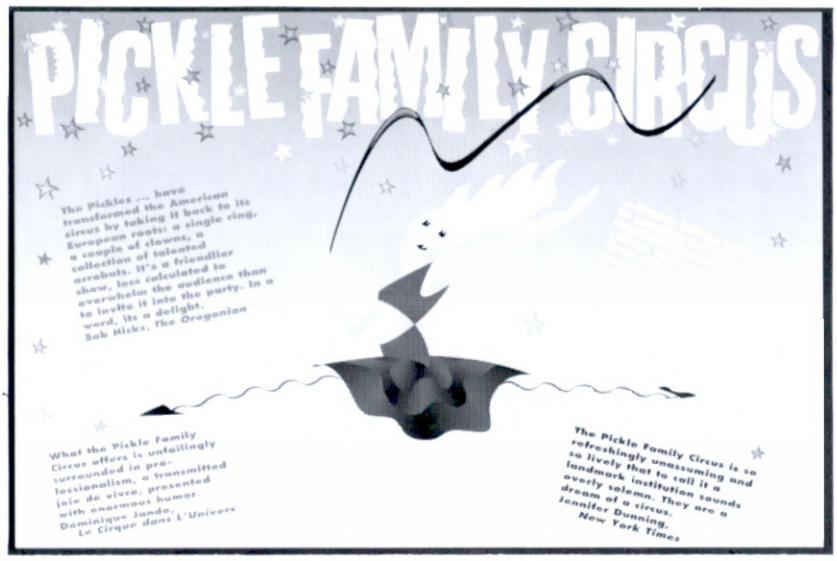
Bill Garden's Holiday Hippodrome show supposedly had a few dates, although it received no press clippings. Likewise, if Jim Russell's Peanut Circus toured in 1990, it did so without leaving finger prints. The only indication that Rudy Jacobi had his Rudy Bros. Circus out was an ad early in the year for phone promoters. The Circle City Circus, owner unknown, was in Dothan, Alabama and presumably elsewhere in the fall. Dianne Wilson with her seals and dogs, Felipi Vazquez on the single trapeze and hula hoopist Belinda Harper were on this one.

Other indoor circuses included the Soviet Acrobatic Circus, produced by Don Hughes, whose cross country tour lasted from December 5, 1989 to May 15. The show had twenty-seven performers who walked a tight and a slack rope, skated, juggled, contorted, and clowned. It appeared at Washington's Kennedy Center in March, and that same month the personnel toured the Circus World Museum after performing at Baraboo's venerable Al Ringling Theater.

Gary Lashinsky's International Circus Royal went to Alaska for the third straight summer. Among those making the trip were the Flying Valentines, the Wainwright living statues, and ringmaster David King.

Alberto Zoppe's one ring Circus Europa had a number of theater dates in the Midwest, South and East, including one at Brooklyn's Academy of Music.

The Pickle Family Circus used striking graphics in its literature as shown in this ticket order form.



The Pickle Family Circus appeared on the West Coast, Arizona and Texas, finishing the year with its annual Christmas time appearance in its home town of San Francisco. The tour was shorter than usual as the personnel spent much of the first half of the year learning new skills under the tutelage of the artistic director of China's Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe. The two hour show, entitled "La La Luna Sea," was a mixture of clowning and serious routines including contortion, trapeze, wire walking, and juggling, all of which was done with the wit and charm associated with Pickle Family productions. The story line, which dramatized the importance of art in society and everyday life, may have been the most philosophical concept ever attempted by a circus. While the company was an ensemble that de-emphasized individual performers, Joan Mankin as Queenie Moon, a boisterous female clown, was the main character. An early September appearance in Alameda, California was the troupe's last side walled outdoor stand as the company decided to play only indoor in the foreseeable future.

The Great Circus Bim Bom from the Soviet Union was the 1990 winner of the Tim McCoy Ill-Fated Tour Award. The show, named after two famous nineteenth century Russian clowns, conducted rehearsals in Wheeling, West Virginia and had an April 25 to July 22 route booked. After averaging only 1100 patrons for the seven performances at the initial engagement in Hershey, Pennsylvania, the show moved to Knoxville where it died after equally dismal business. While subsequent events were not entirely clear, it appeared that the Kuwaiti backer of the tour withdrew his support at this point. Rather than going to Johnson City, Tennessee, the next town, the personnel ended up stranded in Atlanta without food or shelter. About this time a judge in Georgia issued an arrest warrant for the Kuwaiti for writing $58,000 worth of rubber checks in West Virginia. The Kuwaiti eventually surfaced, charging that the hundreds of thousands of dollars he invested in the show through a California promotion company "simply disappeared." By fall, the FBI and the Los Angeles police were investigating the California promoter for possible violations of fraud and theft laws.

Meanwhile, attempts to book the moribund show fell through. When a deal

The Circus Bim Bom from Russia had an excellent performance and a hard luck season. Newspaper ad is from the second and closing stand. John Moss collection.

to put some Bim Bom acts in Las Vegas' Landmark Hotel fell through, some of the performers were stranded a second time. Show personnel survived on hand outs in both Atlanta and Las Vegas. Some of the troupers finally went home in late August courtesy of Steven Leber, producer of the Moscow Circus. Others, including Bim Bom's managing director Yuri Turkin and his family, sought political asylum in this country.

Circus Oz, the new wave show from Australia, invaded America again with short appearances in Berkeley, California and Knoxville, Tennessee before playing New York City for two and a half weeks in June. The performance combined standard circus routines with satire and an occasional political barb. With about twenty performers, a live band playing original music and no animals, the performance was described as "post-modern" in *Newsweek*, and appealed to avant grade audiences more than to conventional ones.

Circus Avalon was another foreign new wave show. The seventeen member British troupe used an Alice in Wonderland theme in their satirical performance. The Knoxville opening was almost missed when props were held in quarantine in Cincinnati because custom officials thought the costume cases--marked "paws, ears, giraffe" and the like --were animal parts. The misunderstanding was rectified at the last moment and the debut went on as scheduled.

The non profit Make A Circus, in its sixteenth year, appeared in parks, recreation centers and auditoriums in the San Francisco and Sacramento areas from June to October. Titled "The Mouth that Roared," a one hour play with a secular self help message, the show featured basic circus skills and conducted a workshop teaching them to kids.

The Oriental version of the circus was well represented in theaters and auditoriums. A Chinese acrobatic troupe called Bao Dao was in Florida early in the year. It may have been the same company that was billed as the Acrobats of Taiwan when it appeared in San Francisco in April. Another Chinese offering was the Shanghai Acrobats and Imperial Warriors of the Peking Opera which was around Chicago in the fall. The Forbidden City Acrobats of China debuted on July 5 at Stony Brook, New York. Headed by Bill Fagan, the troupe played fairs, parks and auditoriums.

Circus Oz from Australia made a few appearances in America. Newspaper ad is for June New York engagement. Fred Pfening III collection.

Circuses were popular attractions at amusement and theme parks. The Circus World Museum's show featured Lou Ann Jacobs' elephants, Jorge Barreda's lions, the Flying Ibarras, and juggler T. J. Howell. Jimmy Williams and Bill Machtel provided the clowning. Dave SaLoutos was the singing ringmaster, and Rick Percy directed the band. The museum acquired two more historic Ringling winter quarters' building during the year, and in March was the subject of the cover story in *Boys' Life*.

Jim Grogan's Dells Crossroads park in the Wisconsin Dells was strongly circus themed. Acts included Gerard Soules' poodles, Irvin Hall's baboons, Ron and Joy Holiday's Cat Dancers illusion, the Flying Poemas, and Brett Marshall on a BMX bike. Grogan's elephant round-up was a fascinating production, combining traditional circus routines with dem-

One of the features at the Dells Crossroads Amusement Park in Wisconsin was its Elephant Round Up with fourteen John Cueno elephants. Sheelagh Jones photo.

onstrations of pachyderms in work situations. John Cueno's fourteen elephants provided the talent with assistance from Roy Wells, Cindy Herriott, Gary Thomas, and Ted Polke.

The Catskill Game Farm in Catskill, New York provided a summer home for Buckles Woodcock's elephants, Joe and Betty Naud's chimps, and Dave Hale's liberty camels. The latter were presented by Evy Karoly. Tampa's Busch Gardens employed jugglers Dieter Tasso and T. J. Howell, the hand balancing Alexis brothers, cloud swinger Pedro Reis at various times during the year. Parc Safari in Hemmingford, Quebec had a theatrical show which used circus acts. The Land of Little Horses in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania featured equine numbers produced by John and Mary Ruth Herriott. RIP: Boardwalk and Baseball (nee Circus World) which Anheuser-Busch closed in January.

Three circuses provided the means for outreach efforts for three religious persuasions. The Royal Lichtenstein Circus from San Jose, California, in its 19th season, was the oldest show of its type on the road. It criss-crossed the country playing 200 cities indoors in auditoriums and gyms, and side walled outdoors at malls, festivals and fairs. Founder Nick Weber, a Jesuit Priest, was ringmaster, presented dogs, monkeys and a horse named Dan Rice. Other acts included juggling, rola bola, and wire walking. The moral and ethical lessons were put over softly in two fables presented as part of the performance. Billing itself as "the world's smallest complete circus," it laid off for part of the summer.

Circus Kingdom, sponsored by the Calvary United Methodist Church in Pittsburgh, toured the Midwest and East from June 5 to August 20. Most of the stands where in gyms, although the show did a few outdoor dates, including five days under canvas. The fifteen performers, all college students, presented wire walking, single trapeze, juggling, trampoline and other routines. Founder L. David Harris was unable to travel with the company for most of the season due to his hospitalization.

This show had a refreshing philosophy which included making the troupe a place where religious commitments were shared and developed. Two other goals were to provide an apprenticeship for aspiring circus performers, and to preserve traditional circus music. The show was remarkably successful in achieving its mission as eight performers from the 1990 tour signed contracts with other circuses at season's end, joining a number of other alumni in the business, and the show's nine piece band was one of the largest on the road.

Circus Maranatha, the most evangelically oriented of the three, had at least a September date in Cincinnati, and two Florida engagements in November, all sponsored by churches. At Cincinnati the personnel included magician Dan Rector, Phil and Francine Schacht with Dondi the elephant, ventriloquist Tim Tice, and illusionists Ron and Joy Holiday. Rick Dority was the ringmaster and Leo Mascitto headed the band. Founder Tino Wallenda Zoppe did hand balancing, high wire and discussed his faith.

Personnel of Circus Kingdom, one of three religiously oriented shows on the road. David Harris photo.

The spot date was alive and well in 1990. Very little information was published in the trade press on numerous circuses which were small in either length of route or physical size, or may have been bookings by well known producers using a different title or whose connection was not explicit in news reports. While these troupes were an insignificant segment of the industry, they exemplified the fluidity and transitory nature of the modern circus in which a show could literally be here today and gone tomorrow.

Dave Hale and Tom Demry put on Circus Fantasy indoors in Cape Girardeau, Missouri in February with their animals and an assist from ringmaster Peter Sturgis who performed magic, the hand balancing Clayton family, and clown Bob Kilmar. Paul Kohler produced a show for employees of the Kodak Company in Rochester, New York from December 7 to 9. Performers included Billy Barton, Lou Ann Jacobs, Jorge Barreda, the Dancing Gauchos, and the Urias motorcycle globe troupe.

Dwight Damon produced a circus at East Aurora, New York in late August that had the Zoppe riders, the Welde leopards, and juggler Frankie Columbo on the program. Sacramento saw a one ring tenter in May to benefit the art museum and symphony. Talent included the Farfan family who had their wheel of destiny and trapeze act on the bill.

The Rimwood Circus, produced by the Espana family, debuted at Englewood, Florida on November 10-11 under canvas. This one featured a story line called "The Phantom of the Circus" written by former Ringling-Barnum ringmaster and author Kristopher Antekeier. Performers included Kay Rosaire with her cats, Bill Morris with his elephants, Manuel Goncalves on the rola bola, and the Flying Espanas. Le Cirque Imaginaire, a three person troupe, appeared in Boston and Chicago theaters.

Arthur Duchek, of Sir Arthur and Goldie high wire fame, booked a circus at New Jersey's Meadowlands from June 22 to July 8 using, among others, Lilliana Kristensen's cats and the Nock's swaypoles. Frank Curry had his annual Nashville date in January, earlier than usual. The Winterfest Circus Spectacular was held at Southfield, Michigan in January. Among the talent were the Great Wallendas, straightjacket escape artist Michael Griffin, and Tim Kappa and Yves Milord on the trampoline.

The Sunshine Magic Circus played two dates and possibly more in Connecticut in March and April. Bob Good and his son appeared in a hand balancing routine, and Jon Marcus did magic. A church near Los Angeles sponsored a circus in December in which rider James Zoppe, foot juggler Chester Cable, elephant trainers Kari and Gary Johnson, and dog trainer Bobby Moore appeared. Veteran Parley Baer was ringmaster. Special honoree at the performance was ninetysomething Anna Louise Hutchinson McCarthy, the last survivor of Barnum and Bailey's tour of Europe from 1897 to 1902, and daughter of circus great Charles Hutchinson.

Montie Montana had Buffalo Bill's Wild West in a Bakersfield, California auditorium from March 22-25. Acts included Don Anderson's white horse troupe. A production called Pawnee Bill Wild West was presented in May at Pawnee Bill State Park in Oklahoma. The Miller Bros. Circus, produced by Gilbert Miller, was in Los Angeles in May. Something ominously called the Dark Circus was in San Francisco in August. Something else called the

Hugo Zacchini, the human cannonball, appeared at the Milwaukee Great Circus Parade grounds. Nancy Cutlip photo.

Unicorn Circus was in Starrucca, Pennsylvania during the summer.

Two American troupes did all their circusing outside this country. Circus Bruno, headed by Bruno Loyal, did poorly in the South Pacific early in the year. Some of the performers were stranded with cat trainer Helen Carpenter having a particularly harrowing experience getting back to the U. S. Armando Farfan Sr. took a show titled Tokyo Dome Circus to Japan in December. Making the trek were cat trainer Kay Rosaire, the Flying Farfans, and clowns Tim and Gigi Tegge. Mark Van Cleave led a five piece band.

The youth circus was well represented in 1990. Paul Pugh's Wenatchee Youth Circus side walled it in the Pacific Northwest from June to August. Circus of the Kids, headed by Bruce Pfeffer, taught children circus skills which they later performed in an upstate New York camp. It also surfaced in Florida and Tennessee in the winter and spring. The Great All American Youth Circus performed in Redlands, California in June after a couple of years in hiatus.

Rob Mermin's Circus Smirkus was a small tenter which appeared in New England on and off from July to September. The actors, all aged ten to seventeen, were students at his circus camp. At a few performances a group of Soviet children augmented the American talent as part of an exchange program. The Florida State University Flying High Circus was featured at Callaway Gardens in Georgia over the summer.

Peru, Indiana's Circus City Festival Circus was held in mid-July with performers from local schools. Honored guests were Tommy Hanneford, Joe Bauer, and Kay Rosaire. The High Flyers Family Circus was held in Bloomington, Illinois. Sarasota's venerable Sailor Circus was produced in April.

An interesting variation of the youth circus was the National Circus Project, a non profit group which taught children rudimentary skills and gave brief exhibitions. Founded by JeanPaul Jenack, the troupe's purpose was to preserve and promote traditional circus arts. Among the performers were Alexander Frisch of the Moscow Circus and Alexandre Slaugotnis who spent some time with Circus Jaeger. They were part of an exchange program with the Soviet Union in which two American members of the company appeared on a Russian circus. The organization appeared at 302 schools, giving over six hundred performances and almost 2500 workshops.

A number of charity circuses were put on by generous troupers during the year. Many well known performers participated in the circus held in conjunction with

January's Sarasota circus festival attracted dignitarites from around the country. Fred Pfening, Jr. (l.) and Joe Bradbury were among them. Rare photo offers conclusive evidence that they are not the same person as is often rumored.

Sarasota's circus festival in January including Mary Ruth Herriott with a dog and pony routine, clowns Skin and Bones, the Cristiani brothers on the trampoline, Bucky Boger with his buffalo, the Tommy Hanneford elephants, contortionist Rudolph Delmonte, and Dave Knoderer's with his comedy mule. Charles Schlarbaum directed the band. The Gibsonton, Florida Showman's Club Circus was held on January 13. The performance was produced by Billy Rogers under a tent donated by Allan Hill. The December 8 Showfolks of Sarasota Circus was produced by Serge Coronas. Performers included cat trainer Eddie Schmidt, cloud swinger Kristine Herriott, bear trainer John Welde, and the high wire walking Los Guerros. The elephants were some of Axel Gautier's charges from Ringling-Barnum, Allan Hill's herd, and Mike La Torres' Susie.

Numerous individual circus acts worked sport shows, trade shows, car dealerships, corporate events, cruise ships, even half times of sporting events. Nevada and New Jersey casino showrooms provided employment for many acts including Tito Gaona and his flying troupe which appeared at Circus Circus Casino in Reno. The Arabian Nights Dinner Theater, near Orlando, presented a show featuring many styles of equestrianism. Veteran showman Gaylord Maynard created the production number.

The Flying Vasquez, formerly of Ringling-Barnum, won a gold clown at the Monte Carlo Circus Festival early in the year. The Flying Espanas won a silver clown as did the hand balancing Alexis brothers who later appeared on Big Apple. Pedro Reis of Big Apple and ex-

Circus Smirkus appeared in New England under canvas with its youthful cast. Don James photo.

Red Hartman, wild animal trainer.

Abe Goldstein, clown.

Mark Anthony, clown.

Tony Diano, former owner of Big Tommy, and Diano Bros. Circus

Ringling-Barnum cat man Larry allen Dean were also on the bill. Beatty-Cole co-owner John Pugh was a judge.

In other news, Peru's International Circus Hall of Fame inducted Ben Wallace, Clifford Vargas, Catherine Hanneford, and Pinito Del Oro. The organization also acquired title to the former American Circus Corporation winter quarters. New members of Sarasota's Ring of Fame were May Wirth, Harold Alzana, Fay Alexander, the Zacchini brothers, and Dr. J. Y. Henderson.

Delavan, Wisconsin's Clown Hall of Fame added Joseph Grimaldi, Bob Keeshan, Leon McBryde, Larry Harmon, and Willard Scott to the roster. The marginal clown backgrounds of a few of the inductees was criticized by some professionals. In other clown news, the Emmett Kelly Clown Festival was held in Houston, Missouri in May, and Clinton, Iowa held its Felix Adler Days in June.

Henry Ringling North was given final approval Sarasota's Ringling Museum board to bury John and Mabel Ringling and his mother Ida Ringling North on the museum grounds. Bridgeport's Barnum Museum had an exhibit of circus posters as did the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Personnel who did time on Ben Davenport's Dailey Bros. Circus held a reunion in Sarasota during festival week.

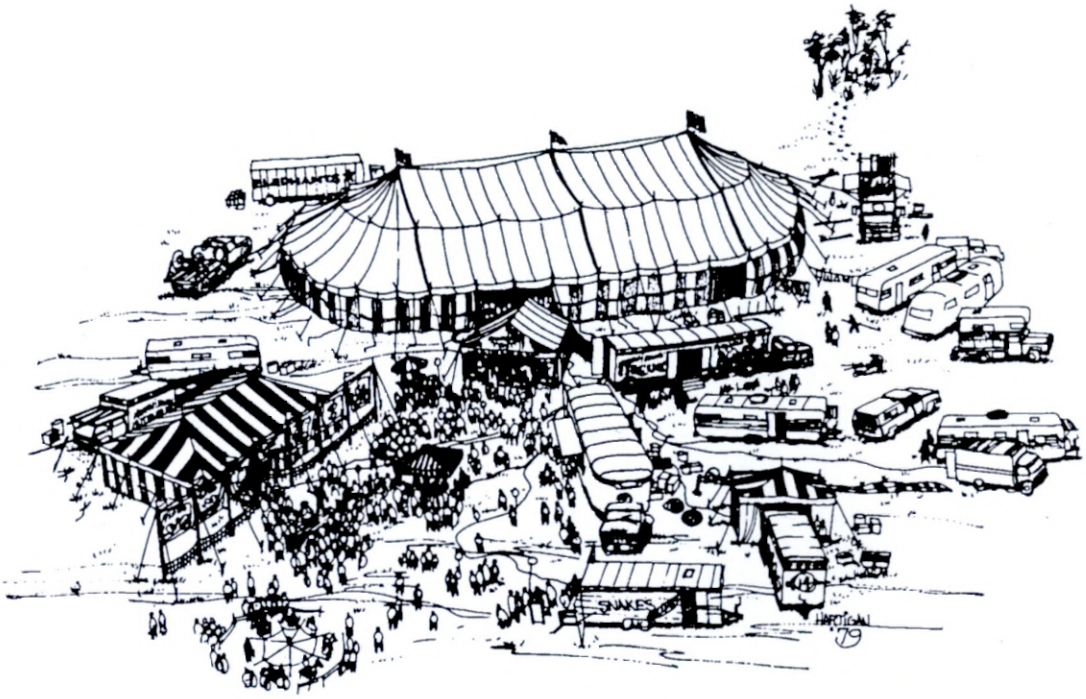
A group called Al Ringling Theater Friends was formed in Baraboo to raise $400,000 to purchase the elegant venue. Jean Ringling, Chappie Fox, and Bob Parkinson were among the board members. The Tom Mix Festival was held in Las Vegas in September. Television's popular Circus of the Stars had its fifteenth annual airing in November. The magazine *Special Report*, which was distributed to doctors' offices, had an article entitled "The New Circus" which featured Pickle Family, Cirque du Soleil, and Big Apple.

While every season removes some well-known names from the rolls, it seemed that 1990 took more than its share of prominent individuals. Deaths during the year included: Mark Anthony (nee Galkowsi), clown; Jack Bailey, former co-owner of Circus Vargas; Tom Barron, retired clown; Jennie Borsetti, aerialist; Tony Diano, former show owner; James Douglass, spec and costume designer; Yvonne Fornasari, performer; Bill Green, CHS charter member; Abe Goldstein, old time clown; Joseph "Red" Hartman, cat trainer; Dr. Ralph Hartman, friend to the profession; Hal Haviland, clown and animal trainer; John Hurdle, former director of the Ringling Museum of the Circus; Bobby Johnson, former Ringling-Barnum concession boss; Fred Johnson, legendary banner artist; Bill Kay, Shrine circus producer; Lloyd Morgan, Sr., retired Ringling-Barnum boss; Sam T. Polack, Shrine circus producer; Felix Salmaggi, retired Ringling-Barnum executive; John Walker, veteran showman; John Welde Sr., bear trainer; and Gilbert Wilson, clown.

An overview of this nature would be impossible without the generous help of many friends, both in and out of the business, who sent me a steady stream of clippings, photos, notes, programs, and other useful data which complimented my own research. Whatever errors this compilation contains, and I fear there are many, are the result of my misinterpreting the data or bad judgement. Whatever merit is due in large measure to their thoughtfulness and I thank them all. They are: Wilbert Bender, Bill Biggerstaff, Joe Bradbury, Arnold Brito, Jerry Cash, Herb Clement, Jim Dunwoody, Bill Elbirn, Carla Emerson, Mary Jane Foote, Bobby Gibbs, Roland Gibbs, John Goodall, Paul Gutheil, Deborah Haney, Struppi Hanneford, L. David Harris, Al House, George Hubler, Don James, JeanPaul Jenack, Ed Jones, Sheelagh Jones, Blake Kellogg, Orin King, Bob Kitchen, Jim Lawrence, Frank Mara, Bill Millsap, Johnny Moss, David Orr, Bob Parkinson, Greg Parkinson, Tom Parkinson, Fred Pfening Jr., John Polacsek, Scott Pyles, Richard J. Reynolds III, Frank Robie, Walter Searfoss, David Shaheen, Mike Sporrer, Al Stencell, John Still, Bob Stoddard, Allan Stopyra, Leroy Sweetland, Tim and Gigi Tegge, Stuart Thayer, Frank Thompson, Enrico and Debbie Wallenda, Bill Whitney, Warren Wood, and William Woodcock. My apologies if I have missed anyone. As always, Don Marcks' *Circus Report* was indispensable. Issues of *Amusement Business, Showfolks of Sarasota Newsletter, White Tops* and various CFA top and tent publications were also useful.

New Year's Greetings

To all our Circus and Carny Friends



Al and Shirley Stencell

Royal Bros.--Martin & Downs--Super Circus International--
Century All Star Circus

PERU INDIANA
INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS HALL OF FAME

GALA GIVEAWAY

JOIN US AT THE PERU ARMORY,

77 GERMAN AVENUE, PERU, INDIANA

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1991 7:00 pm

TICKETS: $100.00 (Admits Two)

All proceeds go toward the Circus Hall of Fame opening in late 1991.

Evening includes cocktail buffet, cash bar, countdown giveaway with dozens of prizes and the chance to meet Circus fans from all over the country.

WE HAVE A LIMITED NUMBER OF TICKETS!

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS HALL OF FAME

P.O. BOX 700 PERU, IN 46970
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SEE YOU THERE!

CARL HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS

SEASON OF 1920

BY GORDON M. CARVER

The season of 1920 saw the emergence of Jerry Mugivan, Bert Bowers and Ed Ballard as a major factor in the circus business. They were Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's greatest competition. Mugivan and Bowers had purchased the John Robinson circus on March 6, 1916 and Hagenbeck-Wallace on December 18, 1918. Following this purchase they were joined by Ed Ballard who provided extensive financing for their operations. In 1920 they toured these shows on thirty cars each. In addition they took out a new fifteen car circus using the Howes Great London title. The three shows created serious opposition for the Greatest Show on Earth.

The routes of the three shows were cordinated so that although they were in the same territory they did not play the same towns on dates close to each other.

The 1920 tour of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus received little coverage in the *Billboard* or elsewhere. Neither were there many fans taking enough interest in the show to record it in photographs. Equipment inventories, sizes of the tents and other information available for other Hagenbeck seasons were not recorded for the 1920 tour. And while a comprehensive route book was published no comments of daily events were reported.

The February 14 *Billboard* carried the first Hagenbeck advertisement of the season wanting a trainer for the lion, tiger and puma wild animal acts. This was the first indication of the changes to come in the program. Emil Schweyer had been the wild animal trainer on the show for many years but now had been let go or he had been offered work elsewhere. The ad brought another trainer, John Helliot, who larer became prominent in the field for many years on various shows including Ringling-Barnum.

Two weeks later a half page ad appeared in the *Billboard* indicating a need for people in just about every branch of the circus. Among those needed were riders, aerialists and a flying return act, acrobats of all kinds, wild animal trainers and any "other acts suitable for a high class circus." The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus advertised itself as the "Highest Class Circus in the World," with the slogan appearing on many of the wagons. The ad listed twenty-six categories of performers and nineteen other categories of jobs needed.

The listing of people needed provides a good idea of the variety of staff required. They were: clowns; band, all instruments: including air calliopist playing by note (an interesting requirement); and a steam calliope player, all to write Dick Martin, band leader; wild west people to write Harry A. Hill; side show freaks to feature, novelty performers, oriental dancers and musicians to write Arthur Hoffman; and black musicians and performers to write R. N. Jackson; ticket department to write Ray Dick; assistant trainmaster, trainmen, polers, chalkers to write George Brown; sleeping car porters to write to Mose Shalof; lunch car countermen to write W. E. Baney; candy stand people to write George Davis; big top tractor drivers, canvasmen, and seatmen to write William (Cap) Curtis; draft stock crew, 4, 6, 8, and 10 horse drivers, train team drivers, horse shoers, ring stock grooms to write George Stumpf; side show canvas crew to write William O'Day; annex crew to write Bert Noyes; light department to Shanty Webber; props to write Charley Brady; wardrobe department to write Mrs. William Curtis; and cookhouse crew, waiters, good pastry cook to write Charles Davis. A contracting agent, press agent and 24 four agents were needed for the advance. Ed C. Knupp was hiring this personnel.

The show also wanted painters, carpenters, strippers, letterers and woodworkers for the winter quarters.

The bottom of the ad listed for sale baggage wagons, a Deagan unafon, Shetland ponies, sixty sets of pony harness and one American bison. This was the surplus left over from the 1918 show purchase which the owners finally decided to sell as it was no longer needed.

The show was now ready to take to the road and an ad in the April 15 *Billboard* asked all those who had been engaged to report to the heads of the departments which were the same as those appearing in the February 28 ad. The circus train was to leave West Baden April 19 for Vincennes where rehearsals were to be held April 20 for an opening on April 22. This ad also stated that the show still wanted a wire act of three people or more and aerial acts. A few more experienced country bill posters were also needed.

The Hagenbeck show, managed by Bert Bowers, moved on thirty cars, the same number as in 1919. There were two advance advertising cars, seven stocks, fourteen flats and seven sleepers. The sleepers were painted orange with silver lettering. The title was painted on the sides and the roof of the cars. Historians William Woodcock and Richard Conover stated that the show purchased a number of new steel cars from the Mt. Vernon firm for the 1920 season, including 70 and 72 foot flats, a stock car and a sleeper. Photographs of the 1920 Hagenbeck show taken by Ralph Miller in Memphis, Tennessee on September 6 show only sixty foot wooden flats. Some 72 foot steel flats may have been on the show but there is no photographic evidence to prove that. All the flats on the 1921 show were 72 foot steel cars.

A Hagenbeck-Wallace cookhouse wagon with a six horse hitch in the West Baden, Indiana winter quarters about 1921. Pfening Archives.

For the first time in several years the circus did not open in Cincinnati, and did not play that city during the season. After the opening in Vincennes the show moved to Terre Haute followed by Indianapolis.

The Hagenbeck show then moved into Kentucky at Louisville followed by Shelbyville for an afternoon only. Matinees only were also given in Lexington and Richmond. While both Shelbyville and Richmond were not large towns they were not too small either and it is presumed they were matinees only because they were farming communities which were often not played at night. Cynthiana and Newport, across the river from Cincinnati, were played on April 30 and May 1.

A *Billboard* reporter visited the show in Newport with his article appearing in the May 8 issue. It was headlined: "Hagenbeck-Wallace draws crowds at Newport, Kentucky.

"Show is up to usual standard of excellence and presents meritorious program--featured animal acts retained--side show is especially good.

"Considering the fact that Greater Cincinnati had had a surfeit of outdoor shows during the week, John Robinson on Monday and Tuesday and three carnivals showing the entire week--the engagement of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus at Newport, Kentucky, on Saturday afternoon and evening was an excellent one. At neither the afternoon nor evening performance was there a sellout, but there were good crowds at both performances, especially the evening show. The weather was ideal.

"The Hagenbeck-Wallace show this year is up to its usual standard of excellence, and presents a highly entertaining and meritorious program. The work of the various performers is uniformly good, being enhanced by the natty costumes worn. The ring stock is in prime condition and shows careful training.

"The menagerie includes a splendid array of animals. On account of a lack of space the menagerie top could not be put up.

"George Connors, equestrian director, directs the performance with skill and keeps everything moving smoothly and with speed. Bert Cole, a leader among announcers, was in excellent voice, and his announcements could be heard with ease in all parts of the big top.

Mayme Gilmore and her snake making an opening of the Hagenbeck-Wallace side show in 1920. Sam Chapman photo.

"The clowning with the show is one of its features, and includes the following well-known joeys: Abe Aronson, Joe Coyle, Walter Goodenough, Three Lindsays, Louie Balmonden, Three Hartig Brothers, Billie Hart, Kid Kennard, Ed Raymond, Jack Reese, Dan Carnegie, Kyo Cook, J. H. Warner, Tom Callahan, Al Brady, Ray Glaum and Doc Soddard.

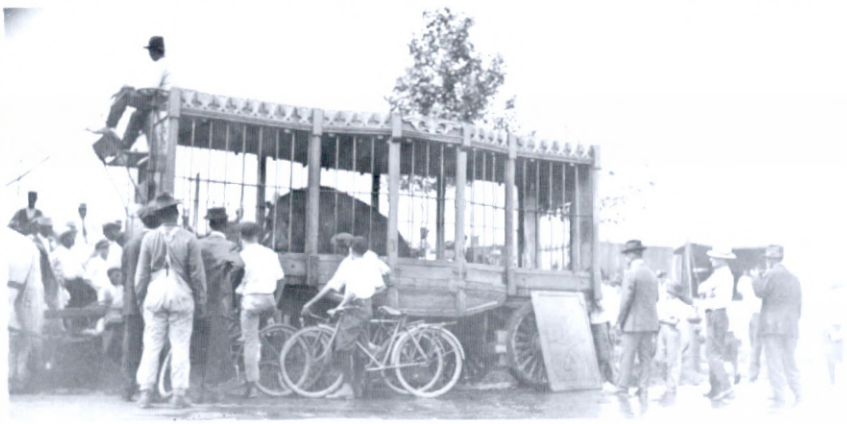
"The big band, under the leadership of Dick Masters, rendered a fine musical program. Master's musicians include Earl Moss, Bennie Waters, S. M. Roach. W. Simpson, Fred Melvin, Al Lauber, George Von Atkinson, F. A. Mathers, Fritz Waldon. F. V . LaVelle, H. J. Mohring, L. J. Moss, Thomas Slack, G. C Montgomery, Roy Bassett, E. L. Schenburg, W. H. Snyder, James Johnson, Robert Steinmetz and Mrs. F. V. LaVelle, on the air calliope.

"Big show staff

"Mugivan and Bowers, owners; Bert Bowers, manager; H. E. Sarig, treasurer; Wells W. Edward, assistant; Ed C. Knupp, general agent and rail contractor; W. E. Haines, assistant contractor; J. E. Hanley, second contractor; W. S. Kellogg, legal adjuster; Ed McCaffery, special officer; Frank Wright, press agent back with show; William Schradel, press agent ahead; Al Nevin and Hugh McCullough, 24 hour men; J. C. Donohue, manager of advance car no. 1; Frank Van Miller, manager of advance car no. 2; Arthur Hoffman, side show manager; William H. Curtis, general superintendent; Shanny Weber, superintendent of lights; Al Williams, assistant; George Connors, equestrian director; H. Hill, concert director; Dick Masters, musical director; Bert Noyes, superintendent of elephants; Lou Clayton, assistant; John Helliot, superintendent of animals; William H. Curtis, superintendent of canvas; George Lyle, assistant; Charlie Brady, superintendent of properties; Dr. A. F. Roberts, physician; George Stumpf, baggage stock; James LaValle, ring stock; George Davis, candy stands; Harry Levy, assistant; Bert Cole, official announcer; Gerald Snellens, programs; Mrs. William Curtis, wardrobe; Charles Davis, steward; L. Chase, assistant to Bert Bowers; Eddie Delevan, front door; Hiram Stevens, assistant; Mark Kirkendorf, superintendent of reserve seat tickets; Will Brady, superintendent of dining car; George Brown, master of transportation; Thomas Crum, parade marshal; Joe Coyle, mail and *Billboard* agent.

"The Hagenbeck-Wallace annex, again under the direction of veteran side show manager Arthur Hoffman, is truly a tented pavilion wherein there is entertainment in abundance and of varied character. Freaks and exhibits of an obnoxious nature are notably absent and on the contrary the program contains several nov-

The Great Wallace bay window hippo cage on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1920. Ralph Miller photo.



elty and singing acts of real merit. The tastefully decorated platforms are neatly arranged around the limits of the interior, the exhibits alternating as to character, beautiful wardrobe and properties being notable features.

"The attractions include Lessick and Anita, in a gun spinning, juggling and singing novelty; the Brocks, bag punchers; the Igorrotes, Sylvia Andrews, snake enchantress; Sig Arcaris and daughter, sword manipulating and impalement; the Jalrans, equilbrists; Mlle. DeArsey, sword walking; Bertie Chase juggling and baton spinning; Baby Viola, fat lady; the Bensons, musical act; Grace Orr, palmist; Frank DuBoise, juggling and magic; Prof. Jackson's jazz band and jubilee singers. At the extreme end is the Oriental department, divided from the main pavilion by a full proscenium in front of which on neat platforms are seated the entertainers, comprising Dolly Isenberg, Trixie Loving, Babe Delmore, Hattie Highland and Augusta Berry.

"The top is a seventy foot round top with two forty foot middles. Although not brand new, it is in excellent condition. Fourteen double-deck banners, artistically painted, form the front display. The staff includes Arthur Hoffman, manager and announcer; Frank DuBoise, lecturer; Harry Highland, Al Isenberg, Lou Delmore, tickets; Peter J. Jenkins, Frank Loving, door and Will O'Day, canvas.

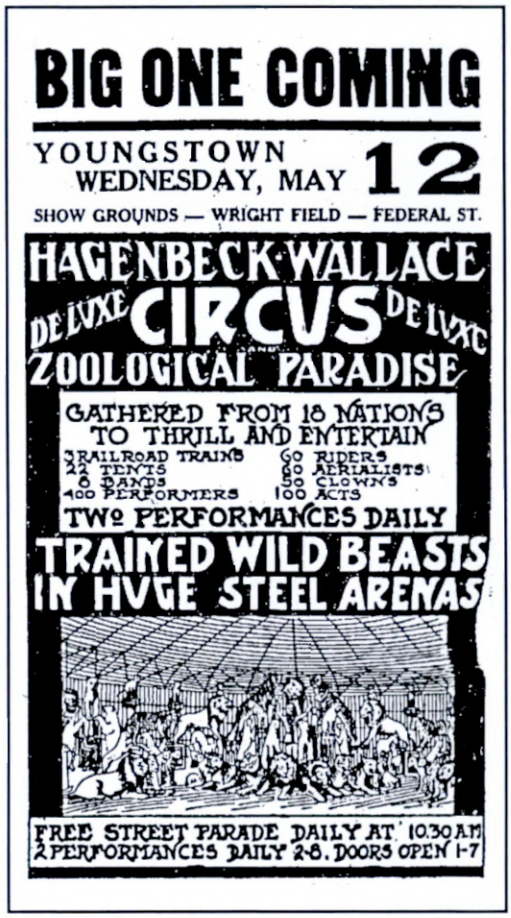
"Ray Dick's "Mysterious Marieta" pit show is a niffty frameup under a 20 by 20 foot new top, with a new banner of large proportion, depicting the attraction in bright colors. A pit contains a big collection of reptiles, presided over by Lee Norris. Ray Dick, manager; Laurel Dick, Ed McEwellen, tickets; Vance Gill, door."

The performance was reviewed by the *Billboard* at Newport on May 1, almost two weeks after the opening. The review continued: "While as indicated earlier the show did not open or play Cincinnati this was fairly close. The John Robinson Circus had played in Cincinnati the previous Monday and Tuesday and there had been three carnivals there that week. In spite of this both performances had seen very good crowds in ideal weather. The performance was up to the high standards of this organization and the work of the performers was uniformly good, the ring stock was in prime condition and showed careful training.

"George Connors, Equestrian Director kept the show moving smoothly and with speed. Bert Cole, the announcer, among the best, could be heard without electronic aid in all parts of the tent. Dick Masters had twenty musicians, including Mrs. LaVelle on the air calliope, playing a fine musical program.

"1-Following a walkaround tournament came the first number.

2- A garland entry with five men riders in each end ring. It made a nice start for the show.



This newspaper ad is typical of those used by the show during the 1920 season. John Polacsek collection.

3- In ring one J. Jackson displayed anumber of contortionist tricks while in ring three Barney Aronson gave a clever exhibition of hand balancing. In the center ring steel arena John Helliot presented a high class puma act.

4- Elephant acts were shown here in the two end rings and were worked by Louis Clayton and Bert Noyes in rings one and three respectively.

5- A tiger riding an elephant was the lone number in this act.

6- Miss C. Masters in ring one and Mrs. Crandall in ring three offered ladies principal bareback riding acts which were nicely presented.

7- An equestrian lion was presented by John Helliot. In the evening performance the act did not work smoothly, the lion jumping off the horse instead of riding it.

8- In the center ring John Helliot worked the big lion act (with six animals) and had excellent control over them and he received great applause.

9- This number was a Gents principal bareback riding act. Dave Castello was in ring one and John Davenport was in ring three. Both are masters of equestrian feats.

10- Ring one had Kid Kennard and Billy Hart with a boxing kangaroo. They drew many laughs as did Walter Goodenough in ring three with a similar act. In the center ring performing bears were presented by Helliot and proved entertaining.

11- This number had aerial acts throughout the big top with the following participants: Gordon Orton, cloud swing; Two Brocks, double trapeze; Louis Griebel, swinging ladder; Mrs. Brock, trapeze; Miss R. Hill, swinging ladder; W. Doria, trapeze; Fortuna, trapeze; R. Goodwin, cloud swing; Miss D. Hull, swinging ladder; and J. Jackson, single trapeze. All performed with grace and agility. This was a rather large, spectacular number.

12- Tight wire acts of distinction filled this spot. In ring one was Barney Aronson. In ring three was Greta Waters and in the center ring was the Jack Moore trio. This was a high class offering.

13- In ring one W. Dorin presented an excellent hand balancing act. In the center ring Gene and Mary Enos were on rolling globes. In ring three the Two Santayamans end in a daring ladder drop. Miss Enos is a clever girl on the rolling globe and adds to the act with some juggling.

14- This was a great aerial bar act over the center ring by the Four Brocks demonstrating that they have one of the best offerings of the kind in the business. Two of the men worked straight and two clowning, working every minute they are on.

15- This number had three exceptionally good menage acts. Ring one had Miss Hill, Mr. Crandall and Mrs. LaDoux. Ring three had Gordon Orton, Harry Allen and Celia Fortuna. The center ring had Louise Griebel and Mr. LaDoux. On the track were Johnny McCracken, Harry Hill and Bessie Hill doing hurdle jumps with Bessie Hill doing a featured high jump.

16- A high class acrobatic comedic act was given by the Three Lindsays in the center ring. In ring one were Kennard and Hart in a similar number and in ring three the Three Hardig Brothers amused with their hat juggling.

17- Equestrian carrying acts of high caliber were given in ring one by Castello and Masters, in ring two by the Two LaDoux and in ring three the two Crandalls. All performed most creditably.

18- In ring one were the Two Brocks and in ring two Gene and Mary Enos,

both in perch pole acts and getting very good hands. In ring three were the Loudon Sisters in an iron jaw act.

19- Hippodrome races including four horse chariot racing concluding the performance.

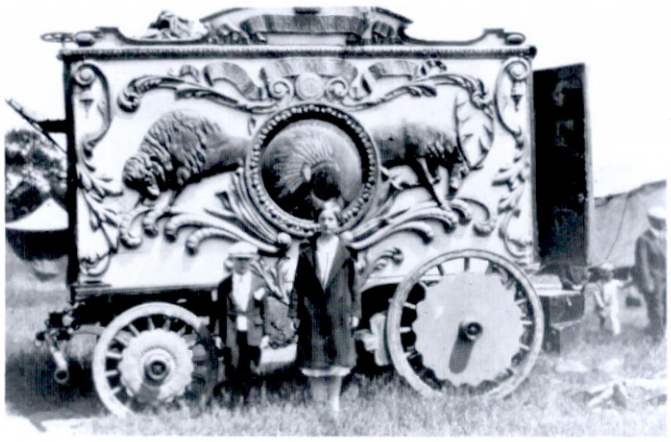
'The usual wild west concert was offered for an added fee. Harry Hill's Congress of Frontier Sports, presented a show full of thrills and daring in addition to expert manipulation of the lariat, and fancy bucking horse riding. A noticeably large percentage of the audience remained at the night show sitting in the reserved chairs. There were very few who did not remain until the end of the presentation.

'The spectacular close of the wild west show was the "outlaw" horse ridden by Frank Smith. He stumbled and fell at the night show both horse and rider landing at the foot of the seat stringers. Others performing were Bessie Hill, trick riding; Johnny McCracken, trick riding and pony express; Earl Sutton and wife, roping and trick riding; Harry McNab and Tom O'Neill, bronk riding; Daisy Spitzer and Ada Eubanks, trick riding; and Shorty Flemm 'Jew' comedian."

On August 19 the show moved into West Virginia at Bluefield followed by Williamson and then back into Ohio (the trip south was temporarily delayed) at Ironton followed by Washington Court House and Piqua. Columbus, only 40 miles from Washington Court House and long a regular stand on the Hagenbeck route, was skipped in 1920.

The show made a 160 mile Sunday run back into Indiana to play Kokomo on May 3, followed by Marion and Richmond. This was a strange route as both Marion and Richmond were on the way to Kokomo. The show went back to the Cincinnati area for a stand in Hamilton on May 6 and then made a 105 run to Lima, Ohio on May 7. The Hagenbeck show played Cleveland for two days on May 17 and 18 after making a trip into Pennsylvania for a single stand at New Castle on May 11.

The circus played Youngstown, Ohio on May 12 and the Youngstown *Vindicator* ran this short after notice the following day: "There was something about the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus parade, seen in Youngstown Wednesday, which made it 'different' from the average pageant of the sort, notwithstanding the fact that all the old-time features,—clowns, 'rube' band and the big steam calliope were along. The funny little clown on his tiny bicycle was followed by the heralds just as of old and then came the bands,



The Carl Hagenbeck Elk and Buffalo tableau wagon appeared in the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus parade in 1920. Pfening Archives.

the animals, more bands and more animals. There was, in addition to the 'rube' band, a Negro minstrel band, another mounted group of musicians, a big band that plays during the performance, and another along towards the rear. A large steam piano, something like the big calliope which brought up the end of the line is something out of the ordinary and its tones were not unpleasant.

'There were plenty of clowns and their quips were all of a clean kind. Only a portion of the menagerie is taken out for the parade but there was enough of it to convey some idea of what the zoo will be found to contain. There were lions, tigers, elephants, iguanas, camels, leopards, hyenas, monkeys, polar bears, Drousky and several other kinds of deer, black, cinnamon and other bears, and a huge hippopotamus, a gnu, several kangaroos and llamas.

'The famous Hagenbeck-Wallace horses have been kept up to their standard, for every one of them was well groomed.

"Wednesday afternoon's show at Wright Field began shortly after 2 p. m., the evening performance will begin at 8 p. m."

This photo of a 1920 Hagenbeck parade was taken from the driver's seat of a wagon. Joe Bradbury collection.

The advance billing for the show was handled by two cars. Ed Knupp, general agent and traffic manager, handled the routing of the show. He was assisted by contracting agent W. E. Haines, who handled local purchase and delivery of animal feed, cookhouse food, water, lot rental and police.

H. E. Wallis, general press agent, handled the newspaper advertising, and called on the newspaper editors. Hugh McCullough and John Nevin, 24 hour men, made certain that all last minute matters were in good shape and that the town and lot were ready for the show. If for any reason the lot was not satisfactory, under water or otherwise not usable, it was the responsibility of the 24 hour men to make other arrangements on the spot.

J. C. Donohue was manager of the No. 1 advance car with eleven billposters, four lithographers, three bannermen, a programmer, a chef, and a porter. The No. 2 car was managed by Frank Van Miller with a somewhat smaller crew of seven billposters, three lithographers, a chef and a porter. It might be of interest to briefly describe the duties of the advance crews. The billposters pasted multi-sheet posters on billboards, barns, building sides and anywhere else that could be reached from the ground. The lithographers worked the streets hanging posters in store windows. The programmer sent the printed couriers to the rural mail routes through the local post office.

On May 21 the show moved into Pennsylvania at New Brighton for nine stands. Buffalo and Niagara Falls, New York were played on May 31 and June 1.

Hagenbeck-Wallace entered Canada at Hamilton, Ontario on June 2 for a month and a half tour of the Dominion. Thirty-six towns and and cities were visited. Three were two day stands, Toronto June 3-4, Montreal June 14-15 and Halifax July 5-6. Three were afternoon only stops, Riviere-Du-Loup June 22, Edmunston June

Joe Coyle, mail man, and the Harp and Jesters air calliope wagon. Walker Morris photo.

Billy Hart and Kid Kennard with their boxing kangaroo appeared in the 1920 performance. Walker Morris photo.

23, and New Glasgow June 30. Summerside and Charlottestown on Prince Edward Island were played July 9-10. It took a day enroute to reach there and a Sunday to get off the island.

The July 20 *Billboard* contained an interesting article on show conditions in Canada. It was sub-titled: "Some reasons why American circuses have fared badly in Ontario and Quebec."

The article, dated June 30, Montreal, stated: "The ears of general agents of American circuses now touring Canada, and the promoters of carnivals that saw nothing but barrels of money for their attractions must have burned pretty regularly since the various American shows crossed the border into Canada this year.

"There has not been a circus or carnival in Ontario or Quebec this summer that has made a dollar, and it is expected that unless some Canadian showman puts up the money and builds himself a circus Canada will go circusless for several years to come.

"It was amusing to us Canadians to see the circus magnates breaking their necks to get into Canada ahead of the others, knowing that Canadian money must be exchanged at loss of fifteen cents on the dollar, and no chance in the world for boosting prices to cover this loss. Canada is not broke by any means, and we consider our dollar is worth an American dollar every time, but Wall street manipulation made it depreciate in value, and we are not just at present on the best of terms with our American cousins across the border. I will say at least the American circus men had the good grace not to try and flaunt the Stars and Stripes in our faces and make us like it.

"We amusement followers if Canada were surprised when we learned that the Sparks, Howe London, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Ringling-Barnum and Sells-Floto were all coming into Canada almost at the same time, and that a string of carnivals was to follow. We could not see how all of them expected to do business.

"The Sells-Floto show was forced to make sort of a detour through Canada to gain an early entry into Boston against the Ringling show. The later show, learning of conditions in the Dominion, cancelled its prospective tour of two weeks, but along came the other three, neck and neck. The only serious run in the Sparks show had was with Howe's London at Owen Sound, where the two shows were one day apart.

"We have learned, from seemingly reliable sources, that the Howe's London show did practically nothing in Ontario, and its stands around Montreal were very bad, particularly at Lachine. The Hagenbeck-Wallace show was here for two days, and did four shows about one day's business. Canadian showmen who were in Quebec say the Sparks show had a good day in Ottawa, a week ahead of the Hagenbeck show, and plenty of publicity in both the daily papers. Hagenbeck-Wallace people had one fair house in Ottawa.

Ed Raymond was one the clowns on the show in 1920. Walker Morris photo.

"With the whole United States to pick from, the average Canadian cannot imagine why so many American shows chose to waste a month or more over here this season. It was fortunate for all of them that they had a bank roll to work on. Andrew J. McDonald."

On July 17 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus returned to the United States. The remainder of the season was played east of the Mississippi River in a route that as just the opposite of that played in 1919.

As visitors to the show entered the grounds they were greeted by two side shows, one the regular side show with a full-fledged bannerline about 170 feet long, two ticket boxes and a bally stand on one side of the midway. On the other side were two ticket wagons and two concession stands plus a single side show banner advertising "ZOMA," a pit show. R. J. Lutes managed the show that consisted of snake charmer Elias Enero.

The main side show was run by Arthur Hoffman with an assistant and two ticket sellers one of whom was Lou Delmore whose wife was Babe Delmore one of two novelty [cooch] dancers. Lou Delmore was later to become a side show manager on a number of the large circuses. The platform acts in the show besides the dancers were a sword swallower; a two person musical act; Sig Arcaris knife throwing; a girl singer; a two person bag punching act; snake charmer; Viola Barton, a fat girl; an unnamed novelty act; athletic display; and a fortune teller. Prof. R. N. Jackson leads a fourteen person black band and singers providing music and a minstrel show with singing, dancing and comedy. Jackson's band also played in the parade each day.

The first stand back in the states was in Calais, Maine on Saturday July 17. This was followed by Bangor, Waterville, Portland, Rumford and Lewiston. A quick run

was then made through New Hampshire and Vermont starting July 24 at Berlin followed by Montpelier, Burlington and Rutland. The show was now starting to move south in a hurry. In New York they were in Glens Falls and Oneonta followed by Carbondale, Pennsylvania, . On August 2 they entered Maryland at Frederick after which came Hagerstown. A twelve city visit to Virginia began on August 4 at Winchester and ended at Pulaski on August 18. Norfolk was a two day stand on August 9 and 10.

The Richmond, Virginia, stand on August 13 was preceded by the usual newspaper advertising as well as billboards, window hits and billing on the sides of buildings. The newspaper ads were of two styles, a nine-inch column giving mostly the name and date and "World's Greatest Congress of Trained Wild Beasts" and "50 Gloriously Funny Clowns." No mention was made of any feature acts. The other smaller ad had, strangely, more detail. It advertised, besides the name and date, a "Zoological Paradise" and suggested it was "Worth Going Miles To See Wonders Gathered From 18 Nations." Besides these general statements it listed "50 clowns, 100 acts, 60 riders, 60 acrobats, 400 performers, 8 bands, 22 tents and the "World's Greatest Congress of Trained Wild Beasts Performing in a Large a Steel Arena."

The usual press handouts preceded the arrival of the show. The day before the show arrived an eight-inch news column spelled out some of the principal acts. Besides the parade the show was said to have an outstanding stud of horses. The elephants were starred in "The Wild Dance of the Elephants" in which they waltzed and did the schottische as well as other tricks, all in time to the music. Although bareback riders, jugglers, acrobats and aerialists were mentioned in passing it was the wild animals that were given the most space. To quote the article, "the tigers ride the back of an elephant and jump through blazing hoops, an unarmed man enters a steel cage and compels eight roaring lions to perform, a battle between a horse and Nubian lion, the horse throwing the beast from its back and fighting teeth and claws with hooves and teeth." Other animals mentioned were trained leopards, pumas, jaguars, boxing kangaroos, skating bears and dancing horses.

On Saturday the show got an even longer after notice praising the show. Of the parade it said "blaring bands, gaudy clowns, prancing horses, tinseled chariots and roaring lions gave a pre-taste of the show. The afternoon, one of the hottest days of the summer, was about full house while the evening show was given to a packed house." John Helliot, the wild animal trainer, showed that he was the boss of the arena. About a third of the review was given over to Helliot's work. Also getting special mention was Bessie Hill, and her horse "Porter." She and "her wiry little black horse carry off the greatest measure of applause when in the hurdling act Porter takes the highest jump of the field and goes over the pole like a bird." Besides the horses and the elephants there was a good collection of "camels, pumas, black and polar bears, llamas, kangaroos, hyenas and other animals." Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus apparently carried a very representative menagerie.

George Stumpf, boss hostler, George Davis, concession manager and Charlie Davis, cookhouse superintendent on the Hagenbeck show in 1920. Pfening Archives.

Bert Noyes, elephant boss, on horse back, leading the Hagenbeck-Wallace herd in a parade. Pfening Archives.

The rest of August was spent in Indiana at Anderson, Lebanon, Crawfordsville, Bedford and Washington. September found the show in Illinois then back into Indiana at Evansville after which it returned to Illinois for two stops, Harrisburg and Cairo.

Finally the move into the south started with stands at Memphis, Tennessee and Corinth, Mississippi; and Sheffield and Huntsville, Alabama. On September 1 the show was back in Tennessee for seven towns, Fayettesville, Murphreesboro, Sheblyville, for an afternoon only, Chattanooga, Cleveland, also for an afternoon only, Knoxville and Johnson City.

The program sold on the Hagenbeck show in 1920 used the same cover design as the 1919 twenty-page songster published by the Harold Rossiter Music Company. The 1919 edition, 10" x 13 3/4" in size, contained ten pages of sheet music. The 1920 edition dropped the music and was only 10 pages in length. The short articles and illustrations were the same both years. Different advertisements for "Adams California Fruit Gum" appeared on the back cover in 1919 and 1920.

It is not known if the printed program was available when the show opened, however the listed performance differed somewhat from the review published after the Newport, Kentucky stand. A program in the Bob Sabia collection listed the following:

"Grand, gorgeous, spectacular tournament.

No. 1 Beautiful garland entry. In ring one, Messrs. Orton, Castello, Palmer, Allen, Goodwin and Jackson. In ring three, Messrs. Crandall, Goodenough, Freehand, Enos, Sanger and Davenport.

No. 2 Your attention is directed to the steel arena. A tiger riding an elephant, presented by Mr. Helliott.

No. 3 Performing elephants presented in ring one by Bert Noyes and in ring three by Louis Clayton.

No. 4 Contortion act by the Two Weircks in ring one. John Helliott with performing pumas in the center ring. J. Jackson and the Two Parkers, contortionists in ring three.

No. 5 Bareback riding by Miss Crandall in the center ring.

No. 6 Comedy acrobatics by the Slayman Arab Troupe in ring one. Lion riding a horse in the steel arena. Comedy acrobatics by the All Arab Troupe in ring three.

No. 7 The Hagenbeck-Wallace clown police patrol in the center ring.

No. 8 The Hagenbeck lion act presented by John Helliott in the steel arena.

No. 9 Bareback riding by John Davenport in the center ring.

No. 10 Boxing Kangaroo presented by Sanger and Goodenough in ring one. Helliott's performing black bears in the steel arena. Boxing Kangaroo presented by Kennard and Hart in ring three.

No. 11 Aerial displays. Over ring one Gordon Orton, cloud swing; Two Blocks, double trapeze; Miss Hamilton, swinging ladder; Miss Stokes, swinging ladder. Over ring two, Miss Brock, trapeze; Miss Hamilton, swinging ladder; Miss Hill, swinging ladder; W. Dorin, trapeze. Over ring three, R. Goodwin, cloud swing; Two Palmers, double trapeze; Miss Hill, swinging ladder; J. Jackson, trapeze.

No. 12 The Hagenbeck-Wallace clown band in ring two.

No. 13 Bernard Arneson, slack wire in ring one. The Weirick Troupe, tight wire in ring two. Floyd Short, tight wire in ring three.

No. 14 Swinging ladder by Ali Troupe in ring one. Gene and Mary Enos, rolling globe in ring two. Hand balancing by Freehand and Dorin in ring three.

No. 15 Clowns in three rings. Bucking mule by Kennard and Hart in the center ring.

No. 16 Loudon Sisters, comedy ladders over ring one. Flying aerial act by the Brock Troupe over ring two. Balancing trapeze by Jerry Alton over ring three.

No. 17 High school horses presented by Miss C. Masters, Mr. H. Allen and Mr. J. McCracken in ring one. High school horses presented by Miss Stokes and Mr. LeDous in ring two. High school horses presented by Miss Hill, Mr. Crandall and Mr. Hamilton in ring three. Miss Josephine LeDoux in buggy on the hippodrome track. Miss Hill, Mr. Hill and Mr. McCracken on the hippodrome track. Miss Bessie Hill & Co. present their steeple Chase races with Miss Hill on "Porter," the highest jumping horse in the world.

No. 18 Comedy hat juggling by the Three Hardig Bros. in ring one. Comedy acrobatics by the Royal Arabs in ring two. Comedy acrobatics by the Three Lindseys in ring three.

No. 19 Gene and Mary Enos, high perch, in ring one. High perch by the Two Brocks in ring two. High perch act by Aronson and Freehand in ring three.

No. 20 Society horse acts. The Two Crandalls in ring one, Castello-Masters in ring two and Davenport-LeDoux in ring three.

No. 21 Iron jaw acts over ring one by the Hamiltons, over ring two the Weirick Troupe and over ring three by the Lordon Sisters.

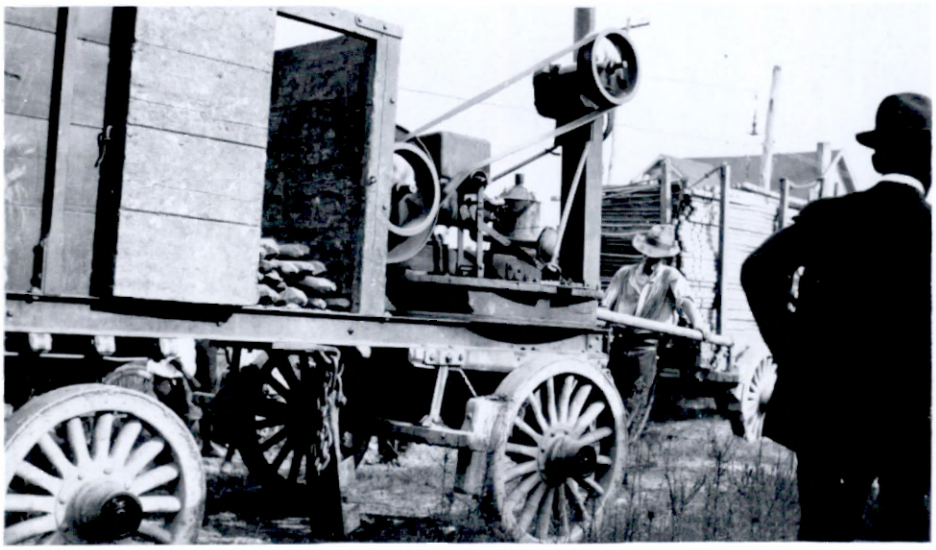
No. 22. Hippodrome races. 1. Tandem race ridden by Messrs. Conners and Coyle. 2. Gents flat race, jockeys Davis, White, Miller and Hern. 3. Ladies flat race ridden by Misses Hill, Short and Smith. 4. Roman standing race ridden by Messrs. Orton, LeDoux and Crandall. 5. Liberty race by Mr. Conners and Boxer."

Notably missing from the 1920 Hagenbeck performance was a large riding act and a flying trapeze act.

In 1920 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus paraded every day but there is no existing parade line-up or roster. Although the show was somewhat smaller than in 1919 it is thought that the number of tableau wagons was about the same. It is probable that mostly the reduction in size would have been mostly in the cages and some of the baggage wagons with the latter having no effect on the parade and the former only marginally since in 1919 not all of the cages were used in the parade anyway. The principal tableau-bandwagon on the show was the larger of the three elephant tableaus, the other two being on the Sells-Floto and Al. G. Barnes shows being slightly shorter and with a different configuration of the carvings on their sides. The other tableau wagons on the show were the Fairytale tableau, Elk and Buffalo, Mother Goose and Red Riding Hood and the heavily carved Lion and Snake. The small Harp and Jesters air calliope and a large steam calliope were also on the show. It is believed that there were also two large racing chariots. The

Ernie Ledoux, Gordon Orton and equestrian director George Connors in front of the No. 2 bandwagon of the 1920 Hegenbeck show. Pfening Archives.

Stake driver and seat plank wagon on the Hagenbeck lot in Memphis, Tennessee on September 6, 1920. Ralph Miller photo.



This 1920 photo taken in Memphis, Tennessee shows a cage being unloaded from a Hagenbeck-Wallace wooden flat. Ralph Miller photo.

rest of the parade was made up of a number of mounted groups and the cages.

In 1920 concessions were as important a money maker as they are today. There were forty-two men under the control of George Davis in this department. Among these were thirteen seat butchers selling popcorn, Coca Cola and novelties and seven who sold balloons. The remaining men handled miscellaneous concessions and stands on the midway and a backyard lunch stand.

The size of the show can be measured by the size of the baggage stock department under superintendent George Stumpf and his assistant George Lyles. Besides six or eight horses used at the runs for loading and unloading the train, there were 126 draft horses. There were 23 teamsters; one 10 horse team, three 8 horse teams, eight 6 horse teams, and eleven 4 horse teams. In addition to these men there was a watchman for the stock cars at night enroute, a greaser to keep the wagon wheels lubricated, two harness makers, a blacksmith, a feed pile caretaker, and eleven helpers who acted as brakemen on the larger wagons as well as driving two horse teams at the runs and or the lot. All told 42 men worked in the baggage stock department. In addition there were 22 men under the direction Spot Conners handling the ring stock.

The show entered the Carolinas where it stayed for five weeks, the longest time it had remained in any one area for some time. On September 20 the southeastern tour opened at Asheville, followed by Hickory, Statesville, Winston-Salem (which was lost for unknown reasons), Charlotte and Union.

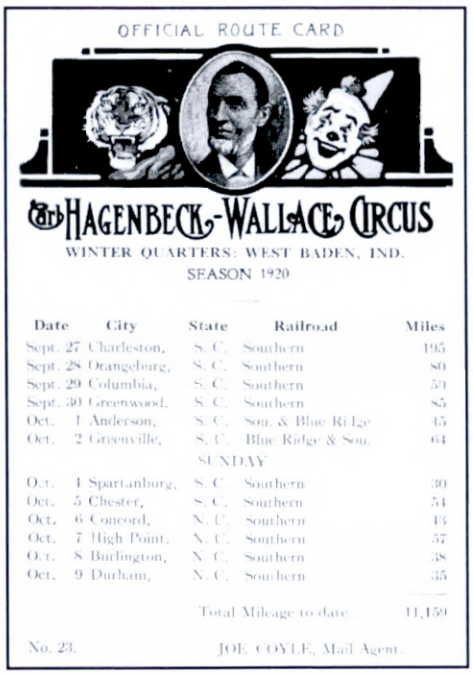
This was fresh territory for the Hagenbeck-Wallace show and although no word of success or failure appeared in the *Billboard*, it can be assumed that the show was getting money. The average jump in North Carolina was about 40 miles, so there were no delays in arrivals.

The show entered South Carolina at Bennettsville on October 20 for four stands. The show was in Augusta, Georgia on October 25 after making a 128 mile run from Sumter.

With sixty men the canvas crew was the largest department on the show. This department was under the direction of William H. Curtis, an old hand at the job having spent a number of years with the Sells-Floto circus before joining the Hagenbeck circus.

Charles Davis had responsibility for feeding about 400 people on the show. The cookhouse had 14 in the kitchen and 33 waiters. The cookhouse crew and the train personnel were not served in the dinning top.

Route card of the 1920 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. Pfening Archives.



OFFICIAL ROUTE CARD

The HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS

WINTER QUARTERS: WEST BADEN, IND.

SEASON 1920

Date	City	State	Railroad	Miles
Sept. 27	Charleston,	S. C.	Southern	195
Sept. 28	Orangeburg,	S. C.	Southern	80
Sept. 29	Columbia,	S. C.	Southern	50
Sept. 30	Greenwood,	S. C.	Southern	85
Oct. 1	Anderson,	S. C.	Sou. & Blue Ridge	45
Oct. 2	Greenville,	S. C.	Blue Ridge & Sou.	64
		SUNDAY		
Oct. 4	Spartanburg,	S. C.	Southern	30
Oct. 5	Chester,	S. C.	Southern	54
Oct. 6	Concord,	N. C.	Southern	43
Oct. 7	High Point,	N. C.	Southern	57
Oct. 8	Burlington,	N. C.	Southern	38
Oct. 9	Durham,	N. C.	Southern	35
			Total Mileage to date	11,159

No. 23. JOE COYLE, Mail Agent.

The last three weeks of the tour were spent in Georgia and Alabama, with one stand in Florida at Jacksonville on November 1. The four stand Alabama tour started at Opelika on November 6 and ended at Anniston the the 11th. The final stand of the season was in Rome, Georgia on November 12. From Rome the winter quarters run took the show 395 miles to Louisville, Kentucky and then 72 final miles to West Baden. The longest jump of the season was 290 miles from Amherst to Sidney, Nova Scotia in Canada on June 28. The total mileage for the season was 13,445.

The November 13 *Billboard* contained a short report on the closing of the Hagenbeck advance car. It read: "The Hagenbeck-Wallace advertising car no. 1 closed its season at Rome, Georgia, on October 30, after being on the road thirty weeks, actually 180 days, and traveling over 15,000 miles, writes one of the members. 'This car is known as the advertising palace of circusdom. It is the largest and best fitted car on the road. The car was under the efficient management of J. C. Donohue, who always commanded the respect and good will of the men at all times. Taking it as a whole it was a wonderful season.'"

The November 27 *Billboard* reported on the show's trip to winter quarters: "West Baden, Indiana, November 18. The Hagenbeck-Wallace Shows have again arrived in their winter quarters in this city.

"The temporary parting of our ways

"Again has come, a pleasant season gone

"And, with it, all the happy nights and days

"Enjoyed by us as we have journeyed on.

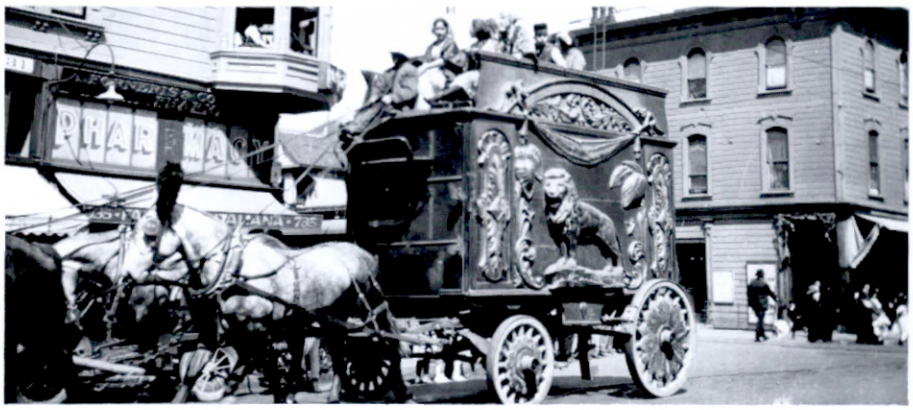
"A tinge of sadness mingles with the cheer

"That rises when the closing day has come,

"And keen regret sweeps o'er as we hear

"The band sent forth the strains of 'Home, sweet home.'

"The above, by a Hagenbeck-Wallace attache and published in the annual route card, expresses concisely the spirit evidenced as the closing hours drew near, and made more concrete on the homeward bound trains of a greater number of people than usual found after the 'blow-off.' A season's end is a season's end, but with the Hagenbeck-Wallace shows this year there was a difference. Not even the prospect of a Thanksgiving dinner at home could, it seemed, overcome the feeling that a period which in many respects has been the most successful and eventful in the lives of so many was passing into history. Perhaps that is the reason a goodly number linger at West Baden as a child



This short Carl Hagenbeck tableau wagon appeared in the 1920 Hagenbeck-Wallace parade. Paul Wissler collection.

clings to a sweet--until the last morsel is gone.

"And the journey from Rome, Georgia, the closing stand, to winter quarters was in fitting conformity with the season in toto. The distance of 458 miles was covered between Friday night and midnight, Sunday, with two stops to feed, the first at Oakdale, Tennessee, and the next at Louisville, Kentucky. At the later place the greater part of the afternoon being allowed, many went up town to visit friends, and attend the movies.

"It is claimed that no more enjoyable 'home-coming' was ever participated in by troupers. To begin with there was everything anybody wanted. W. E. Baney, dining car manager, had laid in a supply more than large enough to satisfy the most exacting, and steaks, bacon, ham, eggs, chicken--everything--was on hand and Bill's car was easily the most popular on the two trains. It is possible that there are Pullman diners which could rival the Baney cuisine, none ever gave better satisfaction to patrons."

Epilog

The 1920 season was very profitable for the John Robinson, Hagenbeck-Wallace and Howes Great London circuses. Mugivan, Bowers and Ballard were ready to expand their operations even further.

The November 20 *Billboard* reported: "Edward M. Ballard is exploiting probably the biggest circus and outdoor amusement enterprise ever attempted. It is well known that he is interested in the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, the John Robinson and the Howe's Great London Shows, and within the last few days he has purchased the Yankee Robinson Circus from Fred Buchanan, and is now negotiating with the Sells-Floto Circus and Buffalo Bill Wild West. The Yankee Robinson show, instead of going to Granger, Iowa, where it has wintered for years, was placed in winter quarters at Lancaster, Missouri. Dan Odem has been sent to Lancaster to take charge of the outfit.

"The understanding is that each and all of those shows will be maintained and run as they are, not expecting enlarged.

"The Sells-Floto Circus winter quarterswill remain in Denver, and be under the direction of Henry B. Gentry.

"The circus will open its season at the Coliseum, Chicago, April 9, for three weeks. The exhibition given, should the deal with Mr. Ballard be consummated, will be the biggest and best from every angle imaginable, it is announced; namely, the menageries of all the above shows (47 elephants) will be exhibited during the Sells-Floto engagement. Performers of all the different circuses will be consolidated for the Chicago engagement.

"One need not add another word because the enormity is self-evident.

"An Eastern theatrical publication, under a Chicago date line of November 10, in its current issue, said that the Sells-Floto Circus was sold to Mr. Ballard and Jerry Mugivan at a recent meeting between them and Messrs. Tammen, Bonfils and Floto. The truth of the matter is that the sale of that show was not comsummated up to as late as Monday afternoon, although practically agreed to.

"It is rumored that the Yankee Robinson Circus brought in the neighborhood of $73,000."

The November 27 *Billboard* reported: "The Sells-Floto Circus is now in the possession of Edward M. Ballard, Jerry Mugivan and associates. The purchase of the aggregation was practically agreed upon two weeks ago, but not until the early part of last week was the deal closed and the money paid over to H. H. Tammen, F. G. Bonfils and Otto Floto.

"With the Yankee Robinson Circus, which they purchased from Fred Buchanan week before last, Messrs. Ballard, Mugivan and associates now have under their wing five circuses and one wild west show. It is understood they will operate all of these circuses next season, but still it is said there is a possibility of them dropping one. Just what will be done with the Buffalo Bill Wild West not a whisper has been made, but it is known that before it passed into the hands of the new owners W. H. Rice and George F. Dorman had their eyes on it."

The purchase of the Floto show took place on November 20 and the amount paid was $219,950.00.

During the 1921 season Ballard, Mugivan and Bowers toured four circuses, Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson, Howe's Great London and Sells-Floto. The Howe's title was placed on the Yankee Robinson equipment and the 1920 fifteen car Howe's equipment was sold.

On May 25, 1921 Ballard, Mugivan and Bowers organized the American Circus Corporation which owned the Robinson, Hagenbeck, Howes and Sells-Floto circuses that season. By the end of the decade they had purchased the Sparks and Al G. Barnes circuses. This was too much for John Ringling, who bought the American Circus Corporation in 1929.

Some material in this article came from the Bob Sabia, Jim Dunwoody and the Pfening Archives.

Still Available

Annals of the American Circus

Volume II, 1830-1847

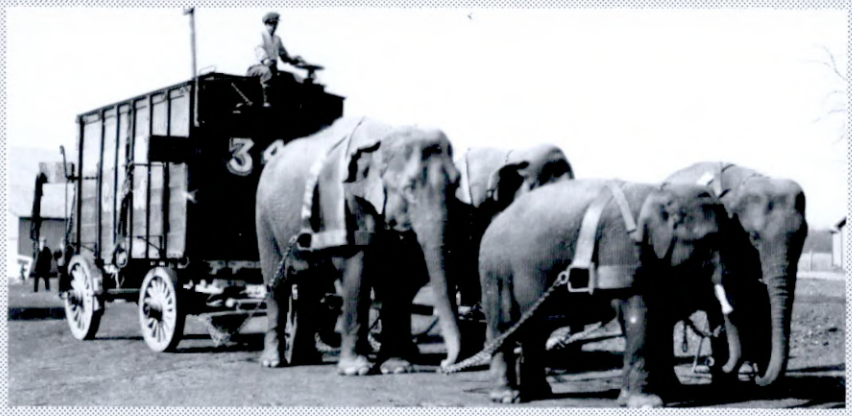
The salient history of the 155 circuses and menageries that toured America in this period. Included is the first attempt at a history of the famed Zoological Institute of 1835-1837.

This book consists of a 154 page narrative, a 205 page appendix (containing the routes, rosters and programs) and an index with over 500 names of managers, agents, bandleaders and performers. It took seven years to research and it's yours for only $30.00 postpaid.

Stuart Thayer

430 17th Avenue East Seattle, WA 98112

CIRCUS LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF ADAM BARDY



This is a new, revised version and expanded book of the adventurous and interesting life of Adam Bardy, which begins at the age of eight. While a young boy, Adam's first "runaway" from home was going off with the Buffalo Bill Wild West back in 1915, when this show came to his home town. Instead of any circus venture at this age, Adam comes across Gypsy friends who gave him car fare money back to his home town, and a good friendship among Gypsies begins when Adam learns all about fortune telling, which is all described in this book.

Now comes 1924, and Adam begins a life of real circus adventure by joining the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus, and now other circuses were to play a role in Adam's life.

Then came his role as a prize fighter, and an interesting role in this sport that led to carnival athletic shows, where Adam, as a middleweight boxer, takes on the role of meeting all comers with the Coleman Bros. carnival athletic show.

But now comes Adam's role as a big time bootlegger, and an adventurous life in this venture begins. During a big bootlegger raid in 1936, see how Adam found a safe place and, with the entire house full of State Police in a raid that lasted eleven hours, Adam is secretly hidden.

And now, Adam becomes a fugitive for seven years. Read all about this adventure in this interesting book, and about how his loyal wife now played an important role in his time of surrender to the police.

Now, for the first time, a full and complete story of his late wife Ann, who for forty-seven years, was a devoted and loving wife, before her passing in 1980. And now, three lonely years are experienced, as Adam describes in his book his life of loneliness, and finally, a new chapter of love and romance is to begin again at the age of seventy-five. Read the true story of love and romance that can come to one of seventy-five, when most people of this age retire quietly, as this complete story unfolds in this book.

Read about how this meeting and friendship developed though a palmistry reading of a lovely girl. For the elderly, especially, this should be an inspiring story to show that, even at seventy-five, the story is told that age in itself is not what counts, but the way we live our lives, as it is all so nicely explained in this book.

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From Big Shot To Big Top To Big Flop

BY WARD HALL

During the years my partner Chris Christ and I used the Wondercade title we made a thousand mistakes we were aware of, and probably a thousand more of which we weren't. Our worst mistake was not using the word "circus" in the title. We had been looking for a title for our big side show to discern it from other circus side shows. In December 1969 while reading a biography of Mike Todd, I was enticed by the title of his water show which was a big hit of the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair: Aquacade. Since we dealt in human wonders, I envisioned Wondercade would be an appropriate name for the Hall and Christ side show.

We had a new entrance banner painted by Jack Synrex using the title. Johnny Frazier was in need of a side show top for his circus so he lettered the two semis and two trailers with the new title in exchange for the used canvas. Thus Wondercade was born. In February 1970 while playing the Miami Shrine Circus for Dave Endy at Tropical Park. Charles Cox, an old friend, came to see us with a proposition to present a tent show in St. Thomas, Virgin Island, during their annual Mardi Gras Carnival. Lou Angeloni, a local businessman, was the promoter.

One of the contractual obligations was to have a baby elephant act. Being unable to obtain one for the date Cox agreed that we could substitute a chimp act. Dick Johnson wanted to make the trip and had formerly worked chimps. We bought a chimp named Simon from Pete Hennon, and Dick presented him on the show as one of the ten variety acts.

We put together a shipping container of show equipment and sent it to the islands from Jacksonville, Florida. The performers, under Johnson's supervision, flew on to St. Thomas while Cox and I went to Carolina, Puerto Rico where we rented a big top and other equipment from Ernesto Azuza. With his trucks and working men we trekked to Fajardo where we took the ferry boat to Charlotte Amalie.

While Johnson and the crew set up the show, Charlie and I went about billposting the island. I believe it was the first time any great amount of billposting had been done there. When we had finished a person was rarely out of sight of the new title, Dr. Miracle's Wondercade. At a prominent location on the main highway which circled the island was an old semi-trailer that served as an ice house. I squared the iceman with some show passes for his family and labored for about four hours plastering show bills on all sides of the ice house. Being quite proud of my daub, I drove Charlie out to see it. To my dismay not a piece of paper was in evidence. My disappointment was complete on learning that every two weeks they brought another ice house semi from San Juan and took the present one back to be refilled with ice and returned two weeks hence.

The engagement ran two weeks. At the conclusion I sold the equipment we had there, which was surplus to us, to Charlie for one dollar, intending to return to Florida with only the chimp, a suitcase with amplifiers and a suitcase containing two boa constrictors. On arrival at airport customs I warned the customs inspector that the snakes were in the suitcase. When he refused to inspect it, another passenger in line asked if he might see them. As the customs agent backed against the wall, I opened the case and removed the snakes. The man inquired if he might purchase one. I offered him both but he only wanted one. Having no place to put it we rented a coin locker for the snakes' temporary home. The inspector asked the man if he had seen anything other than the snakes in the suitcase. When assured it was otherwise empty, the inspector said "I am looking in it with my X-ray eyes." With the customs seal in place we returned home, thus ending the first excursion of the Wondercade circus.

Ward Hall ventriloquist, magician and side show manager extraordinaire. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

The circus side show toured under the Wondercade banner for the next few years, gaining me the nickname "Doctor Miracle," which a few old cronies call me yet.

When we informed Hal Eifort, who booked us at a number of large fairs, in December of 1972 that we were purchasing Pete Kortes' show, he thought it a good idea, but recommended that we not buy Pete's hippopotamus. I agreed, stating that it ate all winter, to which Hal replied, "yes and what's worse, it stinks all summer." Pete Kortes was the greatest side show operator of all time. Along with the equipment we acquired the services of people who had been with Kortes for some time. Among them were Scotty McNiel and his wife Dolly Regan, "the woman turning to stone." We operated the show as our number three unit in 1973. That winter, due to failing health, Scotty and Dolly retired, and we absorbed the other personnel into our other units. This prompted us to turn the show into a fairgrounds style illusion show.

Dick Johnson built several illusions at winter quarters in Gibsonton, Florida, while my partner Chris and I went to Europe to obtain apparatus in Hamburg, Germany. We ordered some special illusions to be built by Jack Hughes in London where we also purchased some unusual pieces from the Davenport Magic Company.

Back in Florida we took delivery on a forty five foot semi trailer from Garson Equipment in Tampa. Specially designed stages were built by John "Red" Trower. Jack Seigler painted a set of banners, while Marge Porter made the stage draperies and all new costumes. Jon Friday was hired to manage the show. Jerry and Shirley, "the Amazing Conkins," Rick and

Pam Dennis and the Jack Donohue family were contracted as principal performers.

We called the show the European Illusion Theatre and opened it in upstate New York in mid-May 1974 for a profitable tour which closed the season at Savannah, Georgia.

That November at the amusement parks convention we booked the show to play the season of 1975 at Crystal Beach, Ontario. It was decided to house the show in the ball room of the park. Therefore it did not require a tent, front, or transportation since the show would remain through Labor Day, a seventeen week run.

In December at the fairs convention at Las Vegas we had so many requests for show that we decided to leave the European Illusion Theatre intact to play fairs as it seemed a simply matter to put together another illusion show for the park.

We started gathering equipment, purchasing trailers, stage, seats etc. of the defunct colored tent show Gay New Orleans from Milton Kaufman. We next acquired the equipment and costumes of the Harlem in Havana show from Gwendolyn Claxton, widow of show producer Leon Claxton. We also acquired the lighting and costumes from Jack and Bonnie Norman's Broadway to Hollywood show which had long been a staple of the James E. Strates Shows. The Harlem in Havana show was for years the feature of the Royal American Shows, and the Gay New Orleans revue was the main show of Gooding's Million Dollar Midway. We secured illusions from Bill Siros, Leonard Simons, formerly the manager of Rogers Bros. Circus and later the stage manager for the Jackie Gleason television show, and Jack Philbin, Gleason's manager. They also gave us two semi loads of scenery and props from the Jackie Gleason show which had ceased operations in Miami. Chris Christ and Red Trower put all the pieces together while Marge Porter reworked the scenery to fit our stage and refurbished the costumes.

What had started out to be simply a carnival type illusion show grew faster than a weed and became a good sized stage production. Larry Crane was hired to direct the show. Ads were placed in theatrical trade journals. Auditions were held in New York for boy and girl dancers. Illusionist Vince Carmen was booked by Phillip Morris to present the seventeen major illusions. Marge and Chris took a crew of technicians from Florida to Canada where they transformed the Crystal Beach Ballroom into a theater with six hundred seats, a stage ninety feet wide by forty five feet deep for six sets of curtains and scenery plus lighting and props including a grand staircase.

Rehearsals began in mid-May. The illusions, novelty acts, and two production numbers were included in a fast paced forty five minute program. The rapid pace was maintained by a prop crew headed by Mike Conklin. Jerry Ross was transferred from overseeing the Hall and Christ interests on Circus Vargas (being replaced by Jim and Sandi Windland) to be the company manager.

The new version of Wondercade opened to much favorable acclaim on Memorial Day weekend. The exterior of the building was decorated with pictorial canvas banners executed by Jack Seigler. The first couple of weeks business was good and on Sundays and holidays as many as seven performances were given.

The Hall and Christ "Magic on Parade" company on tour in Mexico in 1976. Ward Hall collection.

By the middle of July, even though the show was still getting great notices, business slowed considerably. The show was artistically successful, but there was insufficient income to support it and show a profit. Chris flew in from Milwaukee, where we had shows at Summerfest, to close the show. Van, Bob and Ed Hall, who owned Crystal Beach, had found the show so pleasing to the patrons of the park, that in order to entice Chris to keep the show open, they waived the theater rent for the balance of the season.

Chris cut some chorus girls and stagehands from the payroll, and the show finished the engagement in the black, closing on Labor Day. That winter the ballroom building underwent another transformation to become a dark ride, eliminating the theater. For the 1976 season we installed a tent theater with a vaudeville show featuring the multi-talented Dick Johnson family. Wondercade had been returned to Gibsonton with no further plans for it.

For two years, Pedro Lavia's show, Aquarama from Argentina, had been touring successfully in Mexico under the aegis of Ricardo Verdoni. During that time Lavia had purchased considerable equipment from Garson Equipment in Tampa. Chris and I were friends of Stan Garson as we were among his many show business customers.

At that time Mexican law stated a foreign show could remain in Mexico for only two and a half years. Aquarama's time to depart was approaching, and Verdoni, having done well with it, was seeking another attraction to tour Mexico. Garson, being aware of this and of our show in Canada, got us together with Verdoni. Chris and Verdoni flew to Puebla, Mexico where the Aquarama was making its final stand, appearing there under a big top. Contracts were signed and January of 1976 saw our winter quarters humming. Dick Johnson was preparing the tent vaudeville show for Canada. Henry Valentine was readying the European Illusion Theatre for the fairs. Jerry Ross and Fred Lulling were refurbishing eight smaller fairgrounds shows which they managed in two units. Billy Sheets was putting together a sideshow, assisted by Torchy Townsend. Milt Robbins was the boss of the side show we were operating at Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus World. Jim and Sandi Windland were managing our interests on Circus Vargas.

John "Red" Trower was busy as our boss canvasman-superintendent on Vargas, so it fell to Chris and Marge Porter to ready the Wondercade for Mexico as well as preparing our Circus Unique which Chris and Marge would take on a major fair route.

A portable steel grid supported by four towers was constructed to hold eleven tons of curtains, scenery and lights. This was to be a full evening show of two and a half hours so I went to California to purchase costumes from the Ice Capades costume shops. The rather effeminate clerk at the shops remarked as he studied my ample girth, "Well, you know our costumes are all made to fit ice skaters and they are all slim, trim people." I retorted, "Well, dearie, they're not for me. I'm going to put them on slim, trim dancers." He laughed and replied, "In that case go in and pick out whatever you want."

Marge Porter made the special costumes required for certain illusions. Dick

Berry built a girl to lion illusion, and Bill Siros fabricated a vanishing horse.

The equipment was packed tight in a forty foot semi trailer and we headed for the border, crossing at Laredo, Texas. We were fined twice for having an overweight load before we even got out of Florida. Since we would be using a mostly Mexican crew on sound, lights, scenery, props, and wardrobe, we took Jimmy Rap, Fred Lulling and Marge Porter along to help stage manager Nick Buckner, illusionist Vince Carmen, and company manager Leonard Simons break them in.

Auditions were held in Tampa for blond showgirls and dancers. All our American personnel arrived on the appointed date at the Laredo Holiday Inn. All the work visas, manifests and animal permits were to be ready so we could make the crossing in one day with three days to reach Mexico City where the big top was to be up ready for us to move in with twenty local men to help. We figured on three days to set the show and a full week for rehearsals.

Verdoni met us in Laredo with all the papers made out in his name as owner of the equipment. He explained that doing it that way would simplify matters and we could just give him a bill of sale on everything. I quickly explained to him that I wouldn't sign it over to my mother, let alone him, so all the paper work had to be redone.

The trained pony required quarantine, so we gave him to a local circus fan. After a four day delay we crossed the border to the first check point where we learned that no permit had been obtained for El Leone. Suzie was a good looking, good natured lioness, and our advertising featured the girl changing to a lion, so another six hours was wasted legalizing the lion.

Now five days behind schedule, we drove hard through night and fog. Chris drove the tractor trailer to Laredo. Fortunately, Verdoni brought an excellent driver to pilot it through Mexico. At the five check points, there was no question of a bribe being paid the inspectors, but the arguments in Spanish over how much got quite heated.

Against Chris' advice, I took our new red Cadillac with us. I wanted to show off for the Mexican showfolks. I had Marge, Fred, and Jimmy Rap with me. Vince Carmen took his new Lincoln with Nick and Brandy Buckner, and Jackie Rule. Leonard Simons was the guide who shepherded the rest of the people by plane from Nuevo Laredo.

When we got to the outskirts of Mexico City, we called Verdoni advising him that we would be on the lot in a couple of hours and he should have the twenty men there ready to unload. His reply was "Oh, it is impossible to unload today" with no explanation.

The big top from Circus Hons. Atayde was to be in the air ready for us. Instead, when we arrived at the Atayde-owned showgrounds, we were met with a profusion of no smoking signs, and the pungent smell of melted paraffin, boiling in gasoline over open fires while the working men, using garden sprinkling cans, applied this highly flammable mixture on the big top spread on the ground to waterproof it. It was indeed impossible to unload that day. It was two more days before the big top was up, putting us seven days behind schedule.

Newspaper advertisement used by the magic show in Mexico in 1976. Ward Hall collection.

Verdoni arrived and took us all to lunch, after which he took me back to the lot. Asking me to wait for him there so we could go over the music, he guided the others downtown to the hotel. I waited in vain for Verdoni to return. By late afternoon I decided I had better try to find the hotel on my own. I started for my car and discovered that I had not gotten the keys back from Chris when he had parked it. I decided to take a taxi until I discovered I had practically no cash with me, certainly not enough for cab fare. The Cortes metro station was right at the entrance to the lot so I took the subway and luckily guessed the correct direction and exit in the vicinity of the hotel. Finishing my trip by taxi, I had barely enough to pay the fare. On arriving at the hotel I was rather panic stricken and quite angry. I found all my people relaxing in the lounge. I started raising hell, but Nick Buckner, our stage manager who always remained calm, took a cab back to the lot, got the car and parked it in the hotel garage where it remained until I returned to Florida. So much for impressing the Mexican showfolks.

The next few days were a horror. When the top was finally up, the stage could not be set due to the grounds being terraced for permanent circus seating. The leveling could have been done in half an hour with a bulldozer, but Verdoni sent two peons with one shovel and a broken wheelbarrow.

Once that it was possible to start setting the stage we were so behind on time that Chris was working twenty hours a day. He needed rest so badly that he opted to sleep in the truck cab, thus saving the time of going to and from the hotel. Nights in Mexico City can be quite chilly, and toward dawn he woke up cold. Deciding to get one of the stage curtains for cover, he started to climb out of the truck when he discovered he was trapped by one of the guard dogs which the watchman had tied to the truck.

We were using Mexican chorus girls in the dance line, and we had to teach them the choreography. With no stage to practice on, we improvised. A barn on the lot contained a jackass and a camel which we moved to the outside. Cindy Lupton, our choreographer, chalked some lines on the barn floor designating the stage limits, and the rehearsals commenced. None of us spoke much Spanish, and only one of the dancers could speak English, but being trained dancers all went well and they learned the routines quickly.

With long, hard hours of heroic effort, Chris got the stage ready. Marge worked with the Mexican seamstresses day and night to get all the costumes fitted. With one day left, we got to rehearse illusions and got half of the show through a dress rehearsal. Our promised full week of rehearsal time became only a day and a half. With impossible conditions it was only Chris and his crews' blood, sweat, and tears that got the show ready for opening day, April 5, 1976.

The four mast European style top rented from Atayde was 160 feet across with seating for 3200 in boxes, preferred and general admission. In front of the top was an elaborate multi-arched marquee, ticket and office trailers, candy stands, and seven Atayde-owned mechanical kiddie rides. This showgrounds is now the Circo Atayde winter quarters as the show performs at the Arena Mexico. Back then, the showgrounds were enclosed by a concrete wall. The front gate was right on a main street and had a lighted sign, four

feet high by forty feet wide, with the title Magic on Parade in English as the word Wondercade didn't translate into Spanish. Different entrances to the top were used for the different priced seats. The front of the stage had steps leading into the permanent circus ring, so acts made their entrances from the stage.

The matinee on opening day was a full house. The performance went fairly well, but with a green crew and technically no rehearsal, there were some delays which seemed to disturb the patrons in the blues. We learned afterwards that a competing show had placed people in various locations to create disturbances. The night performance went off without a hitch and was very well received by another good house. Neither Chris, Marge or Verdoni saw the show that night.

Verdoni fell on a sidewalk right after the matinee and broke his ankle. Marge had caught a bad cold and was ill from exhaustion as was Chris who added to his discomfort by eating a hot dog from a street vendor. On the street in front of the lot were vendors of all kinds, including two candy floss stands with antique gas flame, hand cranked machines.

During the finale that night someone raided the girls' dressing rooms and stole all their purses while the cast were all on stage.

The following day was Easter Sunday. The advance sale was terrific with four sold out shows scheduled. We arrived to prepare for the first show to find stickers on everything stating, "Closed by the Mayor." The same showman competitor who had hired the hecklers on opening day had gotten to a corrupt inspector and arranged for the show to be closed on the most ridiculous charge of unsafe electrical wiring. Our wiring conformed to the U. S. code.

It took Verdoni five days to get to the bottom of the problem, and get us open again. It took the polish off the business which was ok for a while, but we never had another sellout. When the show resumed and was running smoothly, Chris, Marge, Fred, and Rap returned to Florida. I stayed on for a few more days.

After the problems we had experienced bringing the lion into Mexico, we never used her in the illusion. We secured from Johnny Lam a big Siberian tiger named Cici, as gentle as a kitten, which had formerly been Gene Holter's wrestling tiger. The lioness Suzie's cage was relocated to the back yard. One night because of a cold wind, I covered her cage with a piece of canvas, anchoring it by placing some large rocks on top. In pulling the canvas to cover the bars, I caused one of the rocks to roll off, striking me on the head. I visited the hospital for stitches. After one more day I flew home, leaving Leonard Simons in charge.

Freddie Lulling and Cici the tiger in Mexico City in April 1976. Ward Hall collection.

The music was taped. We had six Mexican chorus girls and eight American show girls; Mark and Cindy Lupton, dance team; Julian Hilton, dancer; Jose Luvas, dancer who portrayed Bugs Bunny; the three Campa brothers, musical comedy act; the three Ibarra brothers, bar act; Alejandro Ibarra, bounding rope; Johnny Lam and wife, poodle act and chimp act featuring Kong, a young gorilla; two Ibarra sisters, aerial cradle act; two Mexican clowns and six Mexican dwarfs; and Vince Carmen, illusions with Jackie Rule, Brandy Buckner, Anita Yulsman, and two male assistants. Nick Buckner was the stage manager, and Leonard Simons was the company manager.

As the board of directors meeting of the outdoor Amusement Business Association was adjourning in Chicago on May 15, I received an emergency call from Chris in Florida. It had been raining steadily all day in Mexico City and between 4:05 and 4:30 in the afternoon the temperature dropped forty degrees in a twenty square block area, causing the rain to turn into a heavy snow. The roofs of an automobile showroom and a supermarket collapsed, killing two and four people respectively. Our big top also collapsed, but fortunately no one was in it. I left at once to access the damage.

I arrived the next day to find a crew moving debris. A center pole had come down across the stage, destroying two thirds of the grid, badly damaging the lights, scenery, and props. The buzz saw illusion was beyond repair, as was quite a bit of the wardrobe. Everyone pitched in and five days later we again got open. The loss of the five days business, plus the cost of repairs dealt a tragic economic blow to Verdoni. I sympathized with his plight, and trimmed the nut where I could, and the price he was paying for the show.

After the storm, business got steadily worse. The weather was uncooperative, and the Mexican peso began devaluing against the U. S. dollar.

The show had been on the Atayde lot over three months. Advertising had been heavy, and publicity good. Verdoni designed the posters and other advertising. In this respect he was very talented. The show wound up the run on June 17, and jumped to Puebla, a large manufacturing city to the east. After only a few days the show got caught in a flood there. More equipment and costumes were ruined. The show was extricated from the mud and water and the next two stands were played in buildings to avoid the continuing bad weather.

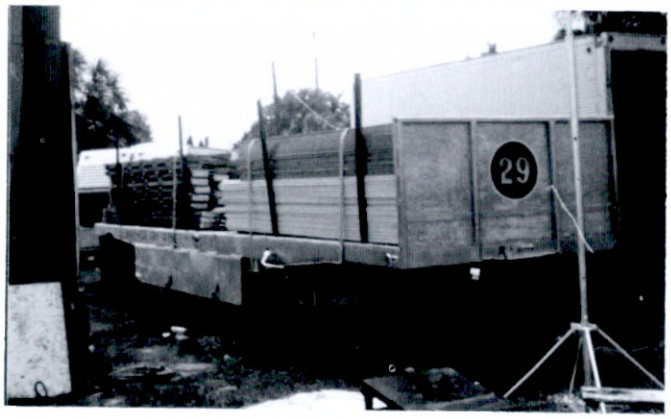
Morale was low. Some of the girls returned to the U. S. The show was heavy and difficult to move. Business got worse. Verdoni got behind in our pay. Overwhelmed with the work and grief, Leonard gave notice.

In the meantime we had opened the season in the U. S. with our other attractions. It was not yet fair time. Business was slow with all units showing a loss. I was at home in Gibsonton, having undergone eye surgery.

Leonard urged me to sell the show to Verdoni who had given me the choice to sell it to him or he would close it and I could take it home. We didn't have enough money to bring it home and pay off the performers who were on six months contracts, and I couldn't travel to Mexico to negotiate the sale due to my eye problem. We agreed to sell it with five thousand dollars down to be paid to Leonard. The balance was to be paid in installments. The sale didn't include the tractor which Leonard brought back. Verdoni gave Leonard one thousand dollars for me, saying he would send the rest of the down payment by week's end. We never received it or any further payments. We later sued and received an uncollectible judgement from the Florida courts.

By the spring of 1978 we had lost all track of the show, which was still operating in Mexico. We could legally attach the equipment and bring it back to the U. S. by paying the Mexican government twenty per cent of the value we had placed on the manifest at the time it entered Mexico. I sent Charles Cox to find it, but he reported what was left would not be worth twenty per cent of the manifest value. So we abandoned it.

We were aware that Verdoni had married an American nurse from Saginaw,



Wondercade seat semi No. 29 in the Gibtown, Florida winter quarters. Jim Parker photo.

Michigan, and migrated there when the devalued peso wiped him out. We played the Saginaw fair in the fall. When I located him we brought suit in Michigan, which was settled out of court. By the time the lawyers were paid and all was done, both we and Verdoni suffered a great loss. Verdoni had honored the contracts with our people and they were all paid.

During the winter of 1978-1979 we again began to assemble illusions and costumes for another edition of Wondercade. I attended the auditorium conventions in anticipation of putting it out as a theater or arena show. We hired Chuck Zamata who had been an insurance agent specializing in show business accounts as our contracting agent. After several weeks on the road with no results we parted company. Bill Siros and Bill Rice who had joined us in July went to Sarasota to seek advice from people experienced in arena show operations. I consulted with Art Concello who opened my eyes to some pitfalls. Being under-capitalized for such a venture, the arena idea was scrapped. Our ads in *Variety* caught the eye of both the Nederlander and Shubert theater interests. I was summoned to New York for conferences. Even though both companies wanted to have the shows in their theaters, we declined as they had costs involved which we were unprepared to meet. That winter Bill Rice used the title on a fine show which made a tour of west coast theaters.

We hired and fired agents as we unsuccessfully tried to promote a route for the show. Chris drew up plans for an elaborate tent show tied into the television program That's Incredible. He went to Burbank, California to meet with executives of Alan Lansburg Productions, producers of the program. They were very interested in the concept, but the TV show was cancelled before the plan could be executed.

In the meantime we were involved in many other activities. We had been providing shows for the Ohio State Fair midway for nine years. It had always been a lucrative spot for us. At the 1980 fairs convention in Las Vegas, it was announced that the Ohio State Fair would go to a pay one price policy for 1981. While we were visiting the Pugh brothers in their penthouse suite at the Aladdin Hotel they outlined their plans for the midway for which they held the contract. Being progressive showmen they realized the fair would need more than rides to justify the ticket price for the majority of fair goers who do not partake of the rides. They contracted with us to produce twelve shows and provide all the equipment for them. We submitted ideas, and from them they selected a trained monkey show, diving mules, a gorilla show, a laser light show, a carnival illusion show, a circus side show, a gladiators vs. man killers show, the Aquarama Water Revue, a globe of death, and the Wondercade Magic Circus.

We booked Harry and Bea Fees' trained monkeys, Johnny Rivers' diving mules, April Fossetts' high acts, Douglas McValley's globe of death, Ken Fess' milking, venomous snakes, and three Seminole Indians wrestling alligators. The latter was arranged by Brian Morrissey. Announcers were Wayne Murray, Jack Korie, Joe Eddy Fairchild, Johnny Meah, Jack Woods, and Jon Friday. Equipment supervisors were Tim Frisco, Jimmy Silverlake, and Harold Mudry. Talent for Aquarama was booked through Bob Maxwell, and included three Olympic gold medal divers in the large cast.

In April we started assembling the equipment at the Gibsonton winter quarters with a twenty man crew. Show fronts were refurbished with a new 120 foot front for the Aquarama, and an eighty foot front for the Gladiators show, all under the talents of Johnny Meah. We bought the equipment of Jimmy Dixon's Magic Circus including the tent etc. for the Gladiator show. We acquired Jack Hatcher's globe of death and transported it to Columbus for MacValley.

Gilbert Miller called me with the news of the Circus Tivoli closing in Hamilton, Ontario. I enplaned there post haste to see the equipment which I hoped to purchase. It was as fine as anything I had seen on this side of the Atlantic. We had had previous business dealings with Sergei Sawchyn, its general director and founder. This fine gentleman gave me the red carpet treatment, visiting far into the night. We offered him $900,000 U. S. for the equipment, but he would neither sell or lease it at that time. My trip was not in vain as I hired Bob Amato who was Tivoli's musical director to be the conductor for the Wondercade. Also hired there was Michelle Malvern who became one of our dancers.

Unable to purchase the Tivoli equipment for the Wondercade we bought the equipment of the Casino Royale tent show from Milt Kaufman in Savannah, Georgia. This included a semi-trailer to carry the tent and stage, and a semi that had been built by Tio Zacchini with a front entrance twenty five feet high by ninety feet wide. We purchased from Dick Garden the big top, a seventy foot round with a forty foot middle, which had been built by Leaf for the Dubsky-Jordan Circus at Sarasota's Circus Hall of Fame. We also bought the curtains, lighting, stage grid, and dimmer board from Garden's Ice America show.

The big entrance was repainted by Meah. Marge Porter and three seamstresses feverishly constructed new costumes, and additional illusions were built. Vince Carmen, our former illusionist, was then starring in the show at the Flamingo Hilton in Las Vegas so we contracted with Roy "The Great" Huston to star in the new show.

Only the Fourth of July was taken off from the frantic pace to enjoy a party at our Gibsonton home for all the show people we could locate in the area. The event was recorded photographically by Jim

Wondercade stake driver that had been purchased from King Bros. Circus. Jim Parker photo.

Parker who had recently arrived from Circus Vargas.

The work accelerated as the deadline quickly approached. By the seventh of August, semi-trailers were being shuttled to Columbus. We took over a motel there to house our personnel, doubling the people in order to accommodate everyone. I had Dick Flint and Ken Fess sharing a room until Dick learned that Ken was bringing his hot rattlesnakes to the room each night. I sympathized with Dick and gave him my room as I moved to my trailer on the lot.

Boss canvasman Jimmy Long quickly got the show in the air with help from Tim Frisco and Jimmy Silverlake. The red, white and blue top had been converted from push pole to bale ring.

Bob Amato put the band together while Tina Repac choreographed the production and rehearsed the dancers. The dance line captain was Sherry Johnson and had six dancers and four models. Roy and Susan Huston performed the illusions. Other acts included juggling by Bobby Fairchild, and Sonja and Elizabeth Campa; unicycle act with Juan Carlos and the Campa Sisters; and a comedy musical act by Carlos and Myrtle, Elizabeth and Sonja Campa. I was the m. c. Jay Brown, director of the theater department at Ohio University, was stage manager. Willeen and Ron Bacon had the candy stand. Dick Flint, who came in on his vacation from the Smithsonian Institution, was head usher and program salesman. Mavis Johnson was office manager. Specialty dancers were Tina Repac, Lisa Johnson, Lisa Barnes, Mary Leon, Michelle Malvern, and Cindy Martin.

Wondercade was presented three times daily. I spent ninety-nine per cent of my time there while Chris oversaw the other eleven shows. Chris had been working sixteen to twenty hours a day since April. By the time the fair closed, he was ready to collapse from exhaustion. We had faith that the fair would be a tremendous success with the new pay-one-price policy. It surpassed all expectations with attendance reported in excess of four million. We had many older patrons tell us that instead of their usual one day visit to the fair, they made multiple visits just to attend the Wondercade Circus.

We anticipated that all the major fairs would soon go the pay-one-price system, and carnivals bidding for the fair midway contracts would want our shows since any of them could promise the same rides as they were all available from ride manufacturers. We figured our shows would set a carnival apart and above their competitors.

As a result of this thinking we put quality shows together in order to build a reputation. We actually invested more than the contract allotted us. But now we had the equipment and a scrapbook of good reviews, and we were prepared to be deluged with offers.

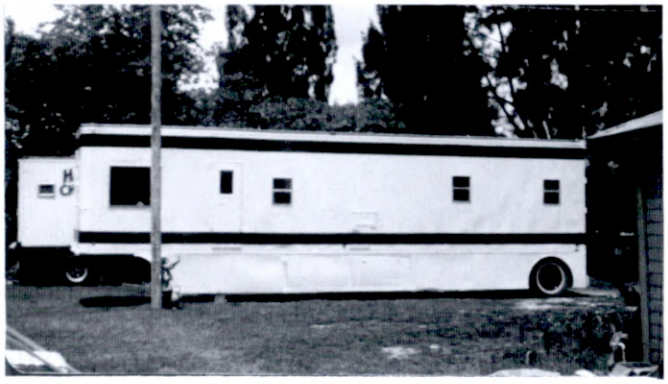
Our judgement was misplaced. We overestimated the desire of the carnivals and fairs to have quality shows. Instead, where fairs elected to utilize the one price policy, carnivals gained or kept their contracts by continually accepting less and less of the fair's admissions for their share. Many fairs settled for single entertainers and small platform acts instead of ten or twelve elaborate productions.

We trucked the equipment back to winter quarters and finished the fair season with just the side show. In November and December we had a smaller indoor version of Wondercade featuring Roy "The Great" Huston with supporting acts and taped music on a tour of one nighters through West Virginia. We titled it Cavalcade of Magic, and Norma Davenport Cristiani booked the tour.

In February 1982 while in South America, Chris and I were the guests of the Tihany show and at Pedro Lavia's Aquarama featuring our friend Vince Carmen at Mar Del Plata, Argentina where the two shows were across the street from each other. Each was playing a three month stand. We were so inspired by these two great shows we decided to take Wondercade Circus out as an independent show, under canvas, patterned after Tihany using shopping center promotions a la Circus Vargas.

Promotional material and special paper were designed by Bill "The Brush" Browning, and an order for lithographs was placed with Harry Anderson of Enquirer Show Print in Cincinnati. In March Chris bought a new Cadillac, and with the new materials took off to book the show through New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The show was booked to make a ten day stand in June at Seaside Heights, New Jersey where we had a wax museum and other attractions on the boardwalk.

I started putting the show together at winter quarters. We purchased the former King Bros. circus big top, a ninety with three forties, from John Pugh of Beatty-Cole. It was sent to



Ward Hall's private living trailer and office on the Wondercade in 1982. Jim Parker photo.

Tommy Sciortino's canvas shop in Tampa for restoration and to be converted from a push pole to bale ring top. We wanted a bale ring tent to enable us to have a cluster of six, fifteen hundred watt quartz floodlights atop each of the four centerpoles. This not only illuminated the top, making it visible from a distance, but also acted as light towers during tear down. Red Trower supervised the construction of a new stage seventy five feet deep by eighty feet wide, strong enough to support the elephant act with a set of towers and grids for six sets of lights and eight lines of scenery. A double deck semi was acquired and fitted for the stage to load on the lower deck while the top deck had fourteen wardrobe closets to accommodate the over six hundred costumes. The illusions were loaded in the rear. In operation the semi was placed under the tent to the back of the stage. When the props were unloaded it became the girls' dressing room, thereby making it unnecessary for them to touch the ground in wardrobe. A straight job truck was located at the side of the stage with the electric dimmer boards and sound controls mounted in it.

Additional semis were acquired for

Wondercade stage and prop semi No. 69 in the Gibtown winter quarters. Jim Parker photo.

conversion to men's and women's sleepers. Sleepers were installed in each end of the front entrance semi for the band. Another was built in the front of the office trailer for the office manager and the superintendent. Each living quarters was equipped with bathroom facilities, water heaters, holding tanks and air conditioners. Jerry Maas, the musical conductor, said it was the first band sleeper he had ever seen which had hot running water.

The rolling stock was as follows:

45' semi. Big top poles and canvas, tractor equipped with stake driver.

40' semi. Girls' sleeper in front; clowns in back.

40' semi. Men's sleeper.

40' semi. Front entrance; band sleeper.

40' semi. 135kw light plant and electric equipment.

40' semi. Stage, wardrobe, props.

40' semi. Seats (former King Bros. pole wagon).

40' flatbed semi. Seats and misc.

45' semi. My living quarters and private office.

Straight truck with lights and sound. Pulled office, ticket wagon; 30' Wells Cargo trailer.

Crew cab pickup truck. Carried tools and tires; pulled 28' donniker trailer.

Buzzy Cuttin's straight job. Carried concession supplies, and pulled candy wagon.

Buzzy Cuttin's living truck. Pulled butcher sleeper trailer.

Roy Huston's straight job with illusions. Pulled their house trailer.

Mike and Sally LaTorres 40' semi. Elephant and living quarters.

Six other private units of performers' motor homes, and trucks and trailers.

My Lincoln.

On the advance was a motor home for the advance clown, a van for the billposters, and Chris' Cadillac.

The trucks and trailers were white with blue and yellow lettering done by John Meah.

The stage area occupied one round end and half of one middle. The fourteen high blues constructed of steel jacks and stringers were in a horse shoe arrangement with flat seats down the center providing a seating capacity for 2400. The band platform was on the ground in front of the stage. Aerial riggings were hung from the quarter poles near the stage right and the wire act rigging was on the ground at stage left. We later worked the elephant act in front of the wire rigging when it became too crowded on the stage due to the abundance of props.

The midway consisted of the big entrance trailer, the candy wagon, a floss joint, a novelty stand, an elephant ride, the donniker trailer, and the ticket wagon. Two light towers were placed in the center of the midway. Tickets were $4.00 for kids, and $5.00 for adults with $1.00 extra for the reserved seat section.

On the advance were: C. M. Christ, general agent; William Rice, contracting agent; Sheila Cooke, special agent; Jim and Mary Hanna, billposters; Uncle Bill, advance clown; and three marketing directors.

Show staff included: Ward Hall, manager; Dennis O'Bryant, office manager; Buzzy Cuttin Jr., concession manager with a crew of eight; John "Red" Trower, lot superintendent; Jimmy Long, boss canvasman; Jack Burke, electrician; Jerry Maas, band leader-organist; Raphael Menendez, rigger; Carlos Campa, stage manager-prop boss; Yana Menendez, choreographer; John Hanna, reserved seats; Mary A. Hanna, front door; Jim Ricketts, mechanic; Marge Porter and Jean Hanna, wardrobe; Frank Stein, accountant; Malcolm Mickler, counselor; and eighteen workingmen.

The International Independent Showmen's Association of Gibsonton allowed us to use the trade show building for a week of rehearsals, and taping of TV commercials by Gordon and Greg Solie's company. When we loaded out we found we were short a few sections of flat seats. We called C. J. Sedelmayer Jr. of Royal American Shows who gave us a truck load of seats and a van load of costumes from their previous Lido productions.

The previous January, Chris had a wrestling promotion under the smaller big top at Palatka Mall in Palatka, Florida to excellent results. So we decided to open there as a break-in date on May 17-19. A dress rehearsal was performed in Gibsonton with a large number of local showfolks on hand as guests.

This color illustration appeared on a Wondercade handbill. Ward Hall collection.

Erecting the Wondercade stage in Palatka, Florida May 18, 1982. Ward Hall collection.

The Wondercade front and entrance at the Baton Rouge, Louisiana fair on November 1, 1983. Ward Hall collection.

The fleet jumped to Palatka on the 14th for set up on the 15th and 16th and a final dress rehearsal on the afternoon of the 17th. All went smoothly on opening day with a number of visitors on hand including Joe and Donna MacMahon, Mary Jo Couls, and Art "Doc" Miller who reviewed the show for *Circus Report*.

All personnel were on hand for the opening except Sharon Vidbel Burke who had a previous commitment with her chimp and dog acts. She was scheduled to join later.

The program was as follows:

1. Overture. Jerry Maas, organ; Harry Wallerstein, trumpet; John Meah, drums.
2. Opening number. Eight girl dancers, six show girls and Ed Twyford, vocalist.
3. Introduction of The Great Huston. Magic appearance of two girls, duck and flower magic assisted by two boys. Disappearance of Lauren Chandler in Tabouret, reappearance in Crystal Casket.
4. Sally LaTorres. Tropical trained birds.
5. Huston and the Temple of Lights.
6. Yana Menendez. Aerial Lyre.
7. Sawing a girl in half. Huston and company.
8. Oriental production number. Vocalists, Ed Twyford, Vanessa Williams, Ward Hall; comedian, Pete Terhurne; girl dancers: Yana Menendez, serpentine dance; Huston with the floating lady.
9. Elizabeth Campa, Tight wire.
10. Divided lady and modern cabinet. Huston and company.
11. "Fuzzins." Costumed comedy cartoon characters.
12. Ward Hall and Perky Perkins. Ventriloquist and magic package pitch.

Intermission. A pitch was made at this time for the concert which consisted of side show acts.

13. Second act Entre Overture. Jerry Maas band.
14. Egypt production number. Dancers; Michelle Malvern, snake dance; Huston and company, mummy case, disembodied girl and pyramid illusions.
15. Juggling display. David Maas, Elizabeth Campa, Norbert Terhurne.
16. Clown walkaround.
17. Huston and company. Girl to gorilla illusion and vanishing elephant with Mike LaTorres and Little Stoney.
18. Cremation. Huston and Helles Belles.
19. Girl shot from cannon to a suspended drum. Huston and company.
20. Elephant act. Little Stoney with Mike and Sally LaTorres.
21. Finale. Entire company, featuring the dancers, models and the Menendez children on the grand staircase. Introduction of all principals.

The concert had fire eating and iron tongue by Poobah, sword swallowing and human blockhead by John Meah, and strong man and escapes by Ed Twyford. Admission was one dollar.

From Palatka we jumped to Tallahassee. Jerry Maas drove the forty five foot semi, his first semi experience. Maneuvering a corner in Lake City, the trailer demolished a store awning. After being extricated from jail, Jerry drove one of the smaller units while Harry Wallerstein continued on with the large one.

Mike LaTorres and Stoney the elephant on Wondercade in May 1982. Ward Hall collection.

All the towns were three and four day stands and were "blue sky" dates, meaning no sponsor. Advertising was extensive with five hundred pieces of billing, free kids coupons, newspaper, radio, and television ads. Many promotional tie-ins were arranged with local businesses. In spite of excellent publicity we were showing to an average audience of fifty two people. With a daily nut of $4500 our losses were heavy.

The show was too heavy to move, set up and open the same day. Chris had been successful with his wrestling promotions, so we decided we could jump in and get up the top, seats and a wrestling ring and have professional wrestling the first night in town. Then the next day we would set the rest and open.

The few patrons who attended obviously loved the show. We thought if we could get a turnout for the first show, word of mouth would fill the next two days. At Panama City we were doing a strong promotion with a local radio station. Chris changed the promotion so everyone was invited to attend the first performance free as guests of the station. As the curtain went up on that performance I observed about one hundred twenty people in the audience, including the station owner and his family. I inadvertently blurted out, "Well, now we know how many people listen to that station."

Contracting had been completed through Georgia, the Carolinas, and on into New Jersey. Billing was in place for Macon, Georgia as we pulled into Ft. Walton Beach, Florida for our fourth stand. With thousands on Memorial Day vacations at this beach resort, how could we miss? We expected the vacationers would spend the day at the beach and pack our tent at night, as we had seen happen with the Tihany show in Argentina. The lot location was perfect at the front of an amusement park on the busy highway in full view of the beach.

During the day the beach was crowded. At night the adults must have left the children in the motels while they crowded into the bars. They certainly didn't patronize the park--or our circus.

Our pay week ended on Saturday. There was enough money left to make this pay day, but we didn't have enough for the next one. We gathered everyone together and explained the situation. If we continued the tour we would be gambling their earnings, and we were not willing to do that. Given the experience of the poor business it wouldn't be a good gamble for them so we announced closing for Saturday, May 30th. We were advertised through Sunday so we gave the

The Wondercade tent and trucks in Baton Rouge, Lousiana November 1, 1983. Ward Hall collection.

personnel the option of play Sunday and dividing any income among themselves. They opted for a Saturday closing. We kept the workingmen and drivers for another week to return the show to Gibsonton.

With another bank loan we got the side show ready and opened it at Ft. Knox, Kentucky the last week of June, playing fairs for the remainder of 1982.

In 1983 we put together the strongest route of fairs possible for our fairgrounds shows. We took five tractor-trailer units and four other vehicles from Gibsonton to Brandon, Manitoba to open, a distance of twenty six hundred miles. We then played fairs at Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, and Toronto, then moved back to the states for fairs at Hutchinson, Kansas, Oklahoma City and Dallas. We fielded the circus side show and four other shows.

At the fairs convention we were asked if the Wondercade would be available for the Louisiana State Fair at Baton Rouge. Since it followed Dallas it would fit into our route. While the other shows played the three weeks at Dallas, Jimmy Long and John Trower shuttled the Wondercade vehicles from Florida to Louisiana. Our contract was for a flat fee and included permission for the fair to use our show for the Queen contest, musical groups, etc. before and between our three daily performances.

Roy Huston came on to work the illusions. A line of dancers was hired from New Orleans. Jerry Bacon and Dick Tanas provided the music on organ and drums. Novelty acts rounded out the cast of twenty two performers.

On opening day our personnel were the guests of Carson and Barnes Circus which was showing nearby. That night we were honored to have D. R. Miller and his family at our show.

Ward Hall making an opening on his side show with Roller Bros. Circus in 1984. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

The fair operated on a pay-one-price policy. The weather turned terrible. Attendance was nil. The civic organization which staged the fair was unable to meet its financial obligations. We had to settle for half our contracted fee, which didn't cover our costs. The finale of Wondercade came on November 6, 1983.

It took five more days to extricate the equipment from the mud, and another ten days to get it all back to Florida. No attempt was made to take it out in 1984. That year we had side shows with Circus Vargas, Roller Bros. and at fairs.

Some of the vehicles were sold locally. The generator, semi, and electric department went to a carnival in the Caribbean. The total investment in the show had gone well over a million dollars, much of which was secured by bank loans. The businesses we were able to continue with couldn't generate enough income to service the notes. By the end of the 1984 season it was evident that it would be in the best interests of all concerned to declare bankruptcy. The filing was in January 1985. The bank foreclosed on the winter quarters acreage, the house and other real estate. We were allowed occupancy of the house for the remainder of the winter.

The bankruptcy auction was held at the winter quarters on April 15th. Allan Hill, owner of the Great American Circus, bought the big top and seats. Most of the trucks and several semis were sold to Dick Garden for his Toby Tyler Circus. The rest went piecemeal. After the auction, which really ends the Wondercade saga, Allan Hill rented the winter quarters from the bank for Chris to build Allan's Circus USA there in only five weeks. Chris managed Circus USA that season.

Ward Hall ringmaster of the Toby Tyler Circus in 1986. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

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A Parting Of The Ways

BY STUART THAYER

On June 28, 1856 in Richmond, Virginia, the eleven-year old partnership between John Robinson and Gilbert Eldred came to an end. Robinson & Eldred's Great Southern Show was no more. That it had lasted as long as it did was unusual. Most such nineteenth-century associations were a matter of one or two seasons. Spalding and Rogers were partners for sixteen years; Fogg & Stickney existed for fifteen; Raymond & Waring lasted thirteen, and Rivers & Derious was on the road nine. However, these were exceptions to the general run of events. All of them were ended when one or another of the partners decided to retire.

The peripatetic nature of the circus business is enhanced by the seasonal nature of the institution. Performers--and workmen--are hired by the year in most cases. The show is formed in the spring and breaks up in the fall; if it goes out a second season it is seldom manned by the identical cast.

Along with the impermanent nature of the business relationships there is the unusual pressure on performers--and on athletes and actors--that is inherent in having to produce their livlihood out of themselves, out of their own bodies. Every day they work they have to draw on their own psyches and their own prowess in a way few other occupations require. An ill, injured or anxious performer cannot depend on his coworkers to carry him through his problem; he has to produce. If he doesn't, he's soon unemployed. This combination of insecurity and anxiety can lead not only to damaged egos, but to personality problems.

Thus, a long-lived association between two performers such as John Robinson (1807-1888) and Gilbert Eldred (1813-1885) is even more unusual than one betweeen a businessman and a performer such as were those between Spalding and Rogers and between Fogg and Stickney. Especially is it unusual when one considers that Robinson was well-known as being a man with a short temper. Without knowing more about him than we do, it is probably safe to describe him as overbearing.

"Impulsive, strong-headed, but after all, kindly-hearted," one observer said of him when Robinson once had to leave New Orleans in haste because of an argument of some sort.[1]

"Blunt, laconic, outspoken," another described him.[2]

These qualities are not what we see in most successful men, but apparently they limited Robinson's success but little for he had a long career and became an extremely wealthy man.

Gilbert N. Eldred had broken into circus life as a clown in 1834, working for his brother, Edward S. Eldred, who was a proprietor from 1832 to 1836. By 1848 Gilbert had become an accomplished comic rider with all that implies in prat-falls and near-catastrophes. He began doing the ceiling walk that Richard Sands had pioneered in 1853 and was advertised in such an act through 1857. He may have purchased Sands' equipment, there is no doubt that he used Sands' advertising cuts. Eldred was a member of Robinson's original circus, Robinson & Foster, from 1842 to 1845. In 1846 the two men framed the Robinson & Eldred combination.

Their success over the ensuing years may have come about through their staking out a territory, the South, and mining it consistently. In this manner they were able to come before a public that was familiar with them. As long as their show was worth paying money to see, they could be assured of loyal customers. Again, the peripatetic nature of most travelling shows gave Robinson and Eldred a leg up simply because they were a known quantity. If editorial opinion is taken at face value the citizens of the rural South were thankful that this little band of performers and workmen struggled across the bad roads and through the hollows each year just to entertain them. Acting upon these attitudes, the partners, in 1851, christened their enterprise "The Great Southern Circus," and so it remained for the life of their association. They ventured into the North in most seasons, sometimes for a week, sometimes for two months, but the great bulk of their stands occurred in the South.

Another seemingly significant aspect of their managerial style was that they were on the road and performing almost constantly. We find no evidence that they went into winter quarters between 1844 and 1854. Instead, in the winter months they made long stands--one or

CIRCUS, MENAGERIE, AND HIPPODROME COMBINED

ROBINSON AND ELDRED, WILL EXHIBIT THEIR COMBINED CIRCUS, MENAGERIE, AND HIPPODROME, IN INDIANAPOLIS, ON THURSDAY EVENING Sept. 28th, at 7 o'clock, and on FRIDAY, Sept. 29th at 1 o'clock and at 7 o'clock P. M.

With all the Great Hippodromatic Feats of the NEW YORK AND PARIS HIPPODROME, among which will be the *Wonderful Scientific Achievement* of a man walking upon a perfectly smooth ceiling, with his Feet uppermost and his Head down, performed by Mr. G. N. ELDRED.

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Doors open at 12½ o'clock. Arena Exercises to commence at 1½, allowing a full hour for the examination of the Animals, to those who do not wish to observe the sports of the Ring. B. HENDRICKS, Agent.

sept16-d2&w1w

This Robinson and Eldred newspaper ad appeared in the Indianapolis *Indiana Daily Sentinel* of September 16, 1854.

two months--in southern cities such as Savannah or Charleston. During these stays they would take vacations from the show, repair equipment and air new acts. Individuals rested and personnel came and went; yet in the sense of halting all activity there are no apparent breaks in these seasons. This may be unique in circus annals, eleven straight years of uninterrupted performance.

It all came to an end in Richmond in 1856. Until recently we had no clue as to the reasons this successful partnership went sour. The *Chester Standard* of Chester, South Carolina is our source for one version. In its issue of June 25, 1857, this newspaper spoke editorially as follows:

"It is known that Mr. Eldred is the successor of Robinson & Eldred, he having bought the interest of Robinson.

"The separation took place on account of the barbarous cruelty of R, which he extended even to the wife of his bosom."

The comment was based on an interview with Eldred or one of his agents. Eldred's circus played Chester on June 22, 1857. It would behoove us to assume an axe was being ground here, yet with our knowledge of Robinson's temperament it is not difficult to believe this account.

According to Gil Robinson, John's second son, Eldred told Robinson at the time of their parting that in five years he (Eldred) would be the richest showman in the world and that Robinson wouldn't have a cent.[3]

As it turned out, just the opposite occurred. Robinson returned briefly to Cincinnati and then journeyed to Albany, New York where, sometime in the latter part of August, he purchased Flagg & Aymar's International Circus. This was a new show in 1856, and, obviously not a successful one. Keeping the same personnel as the former owners he began showing under the title "John Robinson's International Circus and Menagerie," in Geneva, New York on September 1. With variations the title was on the road almost every season until 1930.

Eldred kept the "Southern Circus." It was no doubt his purchase of Robinson's half that allowed Robinson to buy Flagg & Aymar. When Robinson left, so did the performers. The Franconi Troupe, Henri, his wife and daughter joined, and with Sam Long, Jimmie Reynolds, William O'Dell and others the season was continued. They visited North Carolina, Georgia and Florida prior to the turn of the year. In 1857 they slowly moved north, touched Washington and Baltimore, and went through Pennsylvania into Ohio. On October 21, 1857, in Medina, Ohio, G. N. Eldred's Great Southern Show was attached by the sheriff.

In 1852 Robinson & Eldred had made what was for them a deep penetration of the northern section of the country, going as far as Portland, Maine. In late season they began advertising that they had Sands & Quick's menagerie as part of their show. They must have picked up the animals as they travelled south from Maine. We first find the menagerie in Robinson & Eldred's advertising in Raleigh, North Carolina on December 9, 1852, however no ads have been found for them between Sing Sing, New York and Raleigh.

The menagerie came from the Richard Sands group. Sands & Quick, who had two menagerie-circus combinations, advertised in 1852 that they had animals recently imported from England. If this is true, then they had a surplus. Whether the menagerie was purchased outright or leased we don't know. Whichever the case, Eldred couldn't keep up the payments as the lien on his show was placed by Sands, Nathans, Quick and Avery Smith.

G. N. Eldred's Great Rotunda Southern Circus and Menagerie was on the road in 1858, but it was owned by Sands, Nathans & Co. (if one believes the April 17, 1858 *New York Clipper)* or partially theirs (if one believes the April 10, 1858 *Cincinnati Daily Commercial).* Late in the season the circus became one of the earliest American shows to visit Mexico. In 1859 the title became Franconi & Eldred. In October of that year they went to Cuba. Chiarini, Quick and Smith had purchased the residue (though not the title) of the Sands show in late 1859 and sent it to Cuba as well and we think the two operations were combined. This marked the end of Gilbert Eldred's American circus career.

After years of advertising "Southern Men, Southern Horses and Southern Enterprise against the World" Eldred may not have felt comfortable in the United States once the Civil War began. On the other hand, John Robinson didn't seem to be affected by that history. Eldred went to Europe in 1861 and never returned. He exhibited trained horses in England and on the Continent as late as 1867. He died in England in 1885.

We are not privy to the personal characteristics of many of the showmen of the nineteenth century. However, John Robinson's irascibility is noted often enough by contemporary spokesmen for us to accept it as a fact of his personality. Having said that, we feel justified in offering this verson of the break-up of the Robinson & Eldred Circus.

Footnotes:

1. *New York Clipper,* 18 December 1858, p. 26.
2. *Billboard*, 20 August 1910, p. 20.
3. *Billboard*, 9 December 1911, p. 22.

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525 Oak St., El Cerrito, CA 94530-3699

Subscription rates per year: U. S. delivery $35; Canada and Mexico $45
Overseas surface mail $50; Airmail $90

THE ONLY TRIPLE-HORNED UNICORN

Chapter 3 Part One

Everything Entirely New, Rich, Original and Bewildering

By Orin Copple King

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The circus season of 1888 for Topeka began April 9 with a three day run of Holland & McMahon's aggregation which the owners admitted was "the best circus now on the road." Later in the season the claim could possibly be challenged by Sells Brothers, Forepaugh or even Barnum & Bailey.

Where the show came from is unknown to this author, but so early in the season it is likely to have originated somewhere near Topeka. Where the show went following Topeka is also unknown.

The only advertising was two mentions in the North Topeka *Daily Courier*, both on April 10.

"Be sure and see Holland & McMahon's circus to-day, on Jefferson street between 4th and 5th."

The exhibitions of April 9 were reported in an adjacent column which was undoubtedly the work of a press agent.

"Holland & McMahon's circus showed last evening to at least two thousand people, everyone being well pleased with every feature of the performance. The bareback riding was one of the finest exhibitions of the kind ever in the city. They have the best circus now on the road. The educated dog is one of the many features which pleased the people. They will stay in the city Tuesday and Wednesday and will give afternoon matinees each day. The price of admission is placed at 10 cents, and no one should miss seeing this great circus. Don't miss the concert for it's worth twice the admission."

*****

Topeka was not long without tented entertainment, the vacuum being filled by Topeka's own Sieber & Company's International Ten Cent Circus which opened its season on Haymarket Square at Fourth and Jackson Streets with an evening performance on April 16, and thereafter presented two shows a day for the entire week.

The first press announcement was a handout which appeared April 11 in the North Topeka *Daily Courier*.

"Sieber & Co., will give their first exhibition under their fine pavilion at the corner of Fifth (Fourth) and Jackson streets Monday. They have Prof. Fred Lieber and his troupe of trained dogs, and many of the best acrobats in the profession. The entire show is under the management of Prof. Berry, the veteran showman of the western country. The concert company is the finest ever heard under a canvass. Price of admission 10 cents."

Following opening night the *Courier* reported that "a big crowd was in attendance. Their show was in every respect fine, and no one should miss seeing this great show before they leave the city, they will stay here during the week, go everybody and enjoy yourself."

On Friday the *Courier* reported that the circus "is crowded every evening. The show is worthy of the attention of the public and deserves liberal patronage. The trapeze performance is first-class, and the rope walkeress (sic) in the language of the boys, 'She's purtier than a picture.'"

The Topeka *Daily Capital* on April 22 made its only mention of Sieber & Company when it ran the following handout: "Sieber & Co.'s International Ten Cent circus and colossal museum opened here April 16 to a crowded house and played to good business the rest of the week. The performance is good and well worth the price of admission.

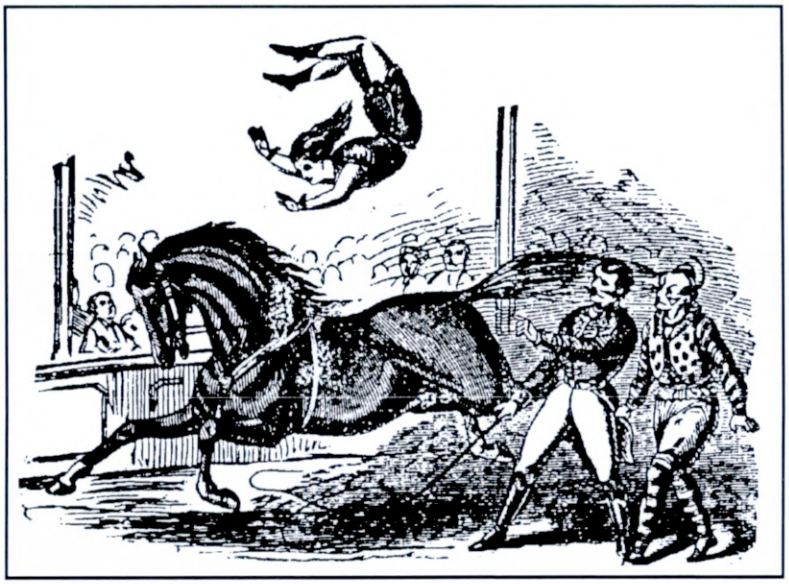
"Miss Annetta Norland on the dancing rope is beyond rival.

"The Lingards--double trapeze and iron jaw is well worth the admission price alone. Prof. Leslie and his troupe of trained dogs are something marvelous. Don't fail to see Prof. Cook (the only ventriloquist) with his talking figures in the annex. They open in North Topeka Monday afternoon. Everybody invited to witness the outside exhibition."

"On Monday and Tuesday (April 23, 24) Sieber & Co. will spread their pavilions just north of the M. E. church, on this side of the river," the *Courier* reported. "During the week just elapsed this company has performed to a full canvas every night. It is the strongest 10 cent show ever in this city, and worthy of the liberal patronage received on the south side. Prof. Berry, well known to all old citizens, is the manager and people acquainted with him know that he is one of the best in his profession. The north side should give them a liberal patronage."

Topeka is divided by the Kansas River with the bulk of the city on the south side. Berry (usually Barry) was a resident of North Topeka which probably accounted for the several stories in the *Courier*. George Sieber and Barry operated small circuses out of Topeka for several years.

The *Kansas Democrat*, Topeka, April 24, commented



Mlle. Vivilli, Queen of the Arena, as shown in the 1888 Sieber & Co. herald. Pfening Archives.

that, "George Seiber's (sic) great two-ring circus, after playing last week in Topeka to a large and well pleased attendance, left to-day for Holton, where they will exhibit the remainder of the week."

The *Democrat* report casts some doubt on the whereabouts of Sieber & Company on April 24. The *Capital* and the *Courier* both stated that the show would play in North Topeka on the 23d and 24th.

The Holton *Weekly Signal* reported on April 25 that "Seiber (sic) & Co's. International 10 cent dog show will open for business in the east part of the city today."

In another column it was stated, "Only ten cents to see the International show today and to-morrow."

Holton was a 30-mile jump from Topeka and considering the strain such a distance would put on a mud show, it is more than plausible that the *Democrat* was correct when it reported Sieber leaving Topeka on the 24th.

"Sieber and Co's show," according to the Horton *Gazette*, "exhibited here Friday and Saturday (April 27, 28) afternoon and evening to good audiences, and was well received. Their admission is only ten cents, but their performance is equal to most of the fifty cent shows that are on the road. They left Sunday for St. Joseph."

The only advertisement for Sieber found so far was carried in the *Brown County World*, May 4, for the exhibitions in Hiawatha, May 7 and 8.

The advertised features of the extravaganza were: "Cyclone of Rare Attractions.

"Two Immense Bands, Mlle. Worland,

"Louisa Londa, the 3-headed Songstress,

"Prof. Wilber's Prize Band,

"The Lingards Trapeze Performers. 25 PEOPLE.

"Admission to see everything 10 Cents. For full particulars see hand bills."

The *World* of May 11 reported that, "The rainfall Monday and Tuesday was in greater quantity than has fallen here for years. It was pleasing to all the people with the exception of the circus folks. It ruined the performance and kept large crowds away. Sieber gives a first class ten cent show."

From Hiawatha Sieber & Company entered Nebraska for exhibitions on May 9 and 10 at Falls City.

*****

The Pittsburg *Smelter* on May 2 carried the following: "Montanyo's and three or four circuses are heading this way and one of them will be here in a couple of weeks. Montanyo is now at Vinita and the next stand is Chetopa, then Parsons and then Pittsburg. The days of the 'tented field' are upon us and elephant will soon go 'round while the band begins to play."

The only mention for the exhibitions at Chetopa is the following small ad which appeared in the *Advance* on May 2.

"Coming again! The Montanio Show, twice as large as before. This is the only show that sticks strictly on one price, ten cents for all. They do not charge 25 cents in small cities and 10 in larger ones. Remember the day and date, May 3rd, 4th and 5th."

The show may have played Parsons, but there is no mention of Montanyo in the Parsons papers.

The nearest thing to a description of Montanyo's circus is a single paragraph in the Pittsburg *Smelter*, May 12, concerning the exhibitions of May 10, 11 and 12.

"The circus has attracted a great crowd at each of the performances, afternoon and evening. As regards the performers, some of the features were very creditable, especially the swinging pole and the Indian club acts. The 'Montanyo Midgets' are good, the little fellows being very comical and fair acrobats. The show deserves unlimited success."

The show left Pittsburg on the 13th for Joplin, Missouri.

"Montanyo, proprietor of the show which has just left us, said to the reporter (*Smelter*) Saturday night, that he would return before long, and exhibit a number of new acts."

If Montanyo never returned to Pittsburg, it was probably due to circumstances reported in the Wichita *Daily Eagle* of July 11.

"Circus Attached.

"Constable Rufus Cone yesterday took possession of the Montanio (sic) show upon an attachment of $285 gotten out by the members of the band. The property, with a few exceptions, was all upon a train ready for shipment when it was taken in charge by the officer and placed in Stocker's ware room."

*****

Early in May of 1888 Gordon Lillie was assembling his show on the fair grounds at Wichita with the season opener announced for Thursday, May 10. Both the Wichita *Daily Beacon* and the *Daily Eagle* carried ads on the 4th of May for Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West which was "Too Large for the Largest Tent Ever Made." The ad promised four days of excitement ending on May 13.

Mentioned in the ads were:

"70 genuine full-blooded Indians headed by the noted chiefs Red Cloud and Wild Horse.

"70 cowboys, Mexicans and cowgirls, riding bucking horses and lassoing wild steers. A HERD OF BUFFALOES.

"100 wild mustangs, wild Texas steers, wild untamable horses that have never been saddled.

"The attack of the stage coach by Indians and rescued by the cowboys.

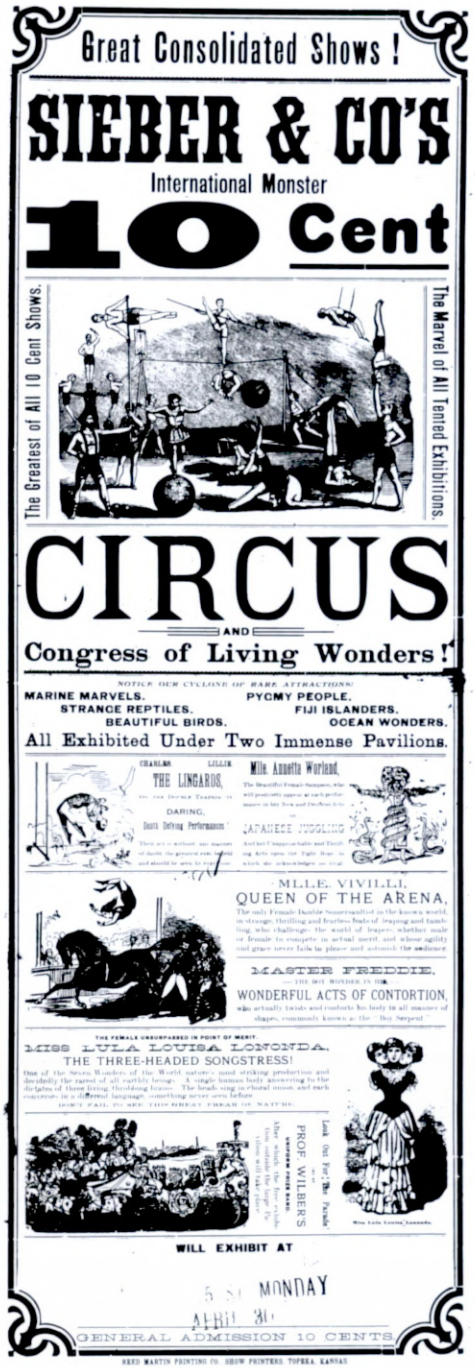
"Grand Encampment and Indian Village.

"Watch for the Street Parade!"

All performances were in front of the grandstand and all were matinees beginning at 3 o'clock. Gates opened at 1 p.m. Admission 25 cents. In large type was the boast that Pawnee Bill would "PLAY RAIN OR SHINE!"

A postponement until May 12 was an-

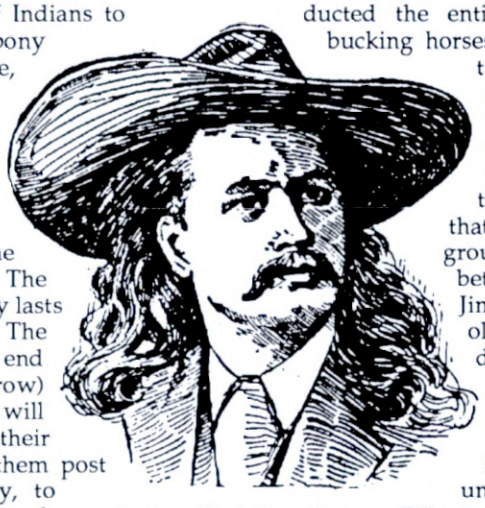
Herald used by Sieber & Co. International 10 Cent Circus in 1888. Pfening Archives.



nounced in the *Beacon* on May 10 with the explanation that "on account of the inclemency of the weather and the improbability of doing anything with the ground as wet as it is."

A different reason for the postponement was reported by the *Eagle* on May 13.

"Pawnee Bill's Wild West company that has been organizing in this city for the past ten days gave a very imposing street parade yesterday with their celebrated genuine 'cow punchers' and 'Buckskin Joe's' celebrated brass band, but no Indians. This was caused by the death of one of their noted chiefs, 'Grey Eagle,' just as they were about to leave their reservation, and all the inducements the management could offer would not influence them to leave their homes on such a solemn occasion. As this tribe, on the death of one of their chiefs, invite all surrounding tribes of Indians to their great 'pony dance' and smoke, at the conclusion of which they give the visiting bands great numbers of ponies as a monument in remembrance of the departed chief. The ceremony generally lasts about five days. The present one will end Monday (tomorrow) when Pawnee Bill will be ready on their grounds to pack them post haste for this city, to make one of the grandest street pageants, on Saturday next, that has ever been witnessed in this country.



Gordon W. Lillie, Pawnee Bill. Pfening Archives.

"The opening will positively be on the above date.

"The Cheyenne Indians are now on their way up from Fort Reno and will arrive here in time to join the Osages for their great exhibition."

May 13 was a day of great confusion on the fair grounds. Hundreds of people went to see a show that did not show, but the main confusion centered on an altercation between the cowboys and Mr. Vennum, a tenant on the fair grounds. The *Beacon* of May 15 reported in a sensational story that the cowboys evicted Vennum, who was an undesirable free-loader, by lassoing him and dragging him around the race track. Vennum disapproved his treatment and swore out a warrant against the cowboys.

The *Eagle* reported the story without the embellishments published by its competitor. Five cowboys posted bond, and, according to the *Eagle*, "They, as well as other eye witnesses to the affair deny in toto the cock and bull story told by the prosecuting witness. The man, it is true, was removed from the grounds; because, as Col. Hartzell says, he was not wanted upon them, but they say no violence, no lassoing, no shooting nor threats were used by them in order to accomplish their end."

The show finally opened the season on May 19 and was reviewed in the *Eagle* the following day.

"Pawnee Bill's Wild West.

"By special request of many citizens, the great exhibition of yesterday will be repeated. The fair grounds were crowded yesterday, and a true exhibition of life on the plains was given. Special praise is due Pawnee Bill for his superb marksmanship and the able manner in which he conducted the entire performance. The bucking horses was one of the features of the day, and the horsethief [one word] was quite realistic. There will be quite a novelty added to this show, and one that will help to pack the grounds. Mr. Jim Fahey, better known as 'Mickey Jim.' the well known and old reliable stage coach driver, who will show his wonderful skill with the reins. The coach will start from the grand stand, under his guidance, with two noted Wichita officials inside the coach. It will then be attacked by the Indians, and if the passengers are stout-hearted enough, they will have a hand to hand battle with the savages while the horses are at full speed. This is said to be an old story with 'Mickey Jim,' as he has been in several genuine battles on the plains, but just how it will go with him will be seen later on. The two officials are well known, and some sport may be looked for during the attack, as it is quite a trying position for one not familiar with it."

While the on and off, and on again off again, and on again season opener was running its course in Wichita, S. S. Forbes, Pawnee Bill's agent, was in Topeka arranging for three days of exhibitions at the fair grounds beginning May 14.

The stars of wild west shows were expected to be men of heroic stature, fearless, endowed with super-human strength and endurance, and Pawnee Bill's press department went to great lengths to present their boss as a worthy competitor of Buffalo Bill. The following handout, which might or might not have been a true account, appeared in the *Kansas Democrat*, Topeka, May 12.

"A Dangerous Experiment.

"Pawnee Bill, the famous Indian fighter and scout, had been in camp with Gen. Sully less than two hours when he was sent for to appear at headquarters. He was requested to start at once with dispatches for Fort Snelling. Pawnee Bill was in the act of mounting his horse when the stage coach, on its way to Fort Snelling with six uncontrollable horses, came bounding into camp. The soldiers soon had the horses stopped, and on examination a bullet hole was found in the driver's head as he lay in the boot. General Sully took in the situation at a glance and ordered Pawnee to take charge of the passengers and do his best to get to Fort Snelling on time and return as quickly as possible. The next relay station was ten miles distant. There the horses and guard would be changed. Within three miles of the relay station the coach was attacked by a band of Indians who were concealed in a tamarac swamp and came charging upon the coach and passengers. The yip! yip! of the Indians and the crack of the rifles soon frightened the passengers and horses. The shotgun messenger riding with the driver was shot and killed, his body falling headlong between the horses where his buckskin clothing became entangled and held him until the station was reached. The Indians gave up the chase as the stage neared the station, the intrepid scout continued on to Fort Snelling, delivered his dispatches and taking a saddle horse, mounted and returned to General Sully, riding and driving one hundred and fifty miles in thirty-one hours. A vivid illustration of these scenes will be enacted by Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West show at the fair grounds on Monday, May 21, continuing for three days."

The advertised dates of May 12, 13 and 14 were cancelled and the opening postponed to May 21, in consequence, according to the Topeka *State Journal*, "of the death of the chief of the tribe to which Pawnee Bill's Indian braves hold allegiance."

The *Journal* of May 18, reported that, "B. W. Kleibacher, manager of Pawnee Bill's Wild West show, is at the Windsor." The Topeka *Daily Commonwealth* reported the name as "Bleibacher."

On the first day of the Topeka stand, May 21, the *Journal*, an evening paper, carried a story written by a press agent, telling the public what to expect.

"Pawnee Bill's Wild West.

"Pawnee Bill's Wild West company inaugurated at the fair grounds this afternoon a season of vivid and realistic il-

lustrations of life on the frontier. Included in the programe is a host of highly interesting scenes, introducing Indian races, Indian dances, Indian sports by a half hundred full blooded blanketed Indians. The attack on the overland stage and rescue by cowboys is given with a realism seldom seen in outdoor amusements. Cowboys riding at full speed, picking up hats, handkerchiefs, small coin, etc., lassoing and tying wild Texas steers, riding bucking bronchos, riding wild steers, cowboy's race for a bride, a custom in vogue only among these brave and daring inhabitants of the plains. An old fashioned Virginia reel on horseback by cowgirls and cowboys. The pony express, illustrating the mode of carrying the United States mails before the days of the railroads; marvelous exhibitions of rifle shooting by Pawnee Bill and May Lillie; burning of a trappers cabin, a scene many of the early settlers were compelled to witness and participate in; Indians burning an emigrant at the stake; ludicrous races on 'burros'; hurdle racing; a vivid portrayal of the method used in the capture and hanging of a horse thief, and many other acts, forming in all an exhibition both interesting and highly instructive. The exhibition will continue for three days, performances being given each afternoon at three o'clock. Doors will be open at one. The admission has been placed at 25 cents."

Among the spectators at the first exhibition was a Topeka newsman, O. K. Swayze, who, shocked by what he saw, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Journal*.

"Sickening Brutality.

"Some time ago a humane society was organized at the Grand (theater) with a flourish of trumpets, but I have heard nothing of the results of their work so far. Being a friend of the dumb animal, and regretting that our statute books do not contain more stringent laws on the subject, I take the liberty of calling the attention of the society recently organized, to a case of sickening brutality that comes within the poor law we now have, and which should not be countenanced for a minute in a civilized country. I refer to the so-called 'Wild West' show now at the fair grounds. Bull baiting and cock fighting pale into insignificance when compared with these disgusting displays of brutality. Big land lubbers, whose growth of hair denotes their lack of brains, are the 'actors' in this panorama of cruelty, and seem to strive to torture the poor ponies they ride as near the point of death as possible, and often times they are compelled to fall to the ground from sheer exhaustion, only to be forced up again by a beating from the fists of these big duffers, or a jab from their half inch spurs, or being lashed with a rawhide or lariat. The bits used, alone, furnish grounds for their arrest for extreme cruelty. Crowds of our people go out and applaud these performances. What kind of stuff are our people made of that they applaud, or even patronize such sickening displays of cruelty? Where is our humane society?--O. K. Swayze."

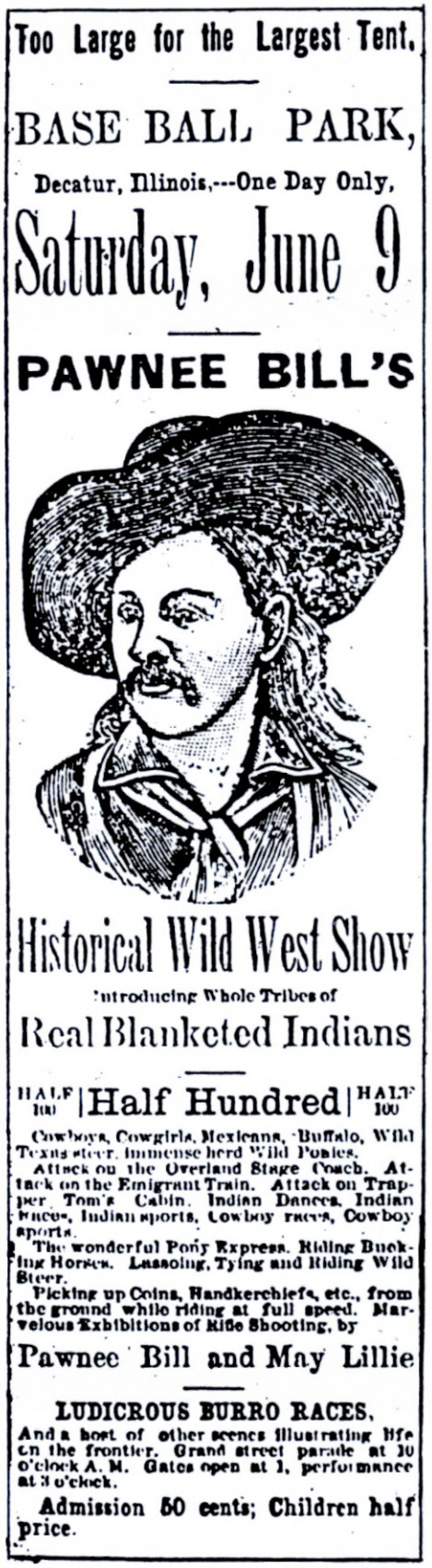
"The *Journal* was honored this morning [May 23] with a call from Mr. Pawnee Bill. Bill enters general and sweeping denial of the statements of Mr. Swayze regarding the cruelty practised in the Wild West exhibition. He further insists that he is a gentleman, if he does wear long hair. Mr. Pawnee Bill, while a good example of the kind of men which are rocked in the cradle of the wild and wooly west, has the air of a gentleman, though blunt and plain spoken."

Brutality was not limited to the live stock. A handout in the *Commonwealth* of May 11 reported the other half of the story.

"Cowboy Fun On The Ranch.

"A cowboy, speaking of the capture of a horse, says: Quick as he is, he is not quick enough to escape the lasso thrown around his neck and his feet. In less time than it takes to tell this the pony lies panting on the ground. The saddle and hackamore are put on, the cowboy smiles, looks at his companions and says: 'Boys, I wish you could all go with me; heaps of fun.' Everybody is feeling happy. The cowboy climes into the saddle, gives the horse a shake, takes one more look around, and the air is full of cowboy and horse's legs. For the first minute the pony has all the fun. The six-shooters fly from the cowboy's holsters, the buttons fly off his shirt, the buckle breaks that holds his 'Chaps' and before the cowboy can realize where he is he looks like a scarecrow. But still he holds on. All his clothes are gone excepting his spurs and the silk handkerchief around his neck and a homespun shirt, which is tougher than the bucking horse's hide. The cowboy no longer smiles, his nose is bleeding, the blood gushes from his ears, but still he is encouraged. At last the horse, completely exhausted, comes down out of the air with his head and heels all together, his back is rounded up like a cat on a wall, the cinches both break and the cowboy and saddle lie piled up in a heap amid the wild yells from his commrades, who cannot contain themselves with delight. A vivid illustration of these amusing incidents in the life of a cowboy will be given at the exhibition of Pawnee Bill's Wild West show at the State Fair Grounds on Monday, May 14. There will be no extra charge for vehicles. Gates open at 1 p.m. Performance at 3."

There was no Society for the Prevention



Newspaper ad used by the Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West Show in 1888. Circus World Museum Collection.

of Cruelty to cowboys and other macho men.

After three days of good business Pawnee Bill moved on to St. Joseph, Missouri.

Pawnee Bill--Gordon W. Lillie--was born in Bloomington, Illinois, February 15, 1860. The family moved to Kansas in 1872 settling near Wellington. Lillie was teaching school on the Pawnee reservation in 1883 when he was hired by Buffalo Bill to accompany a group of Pawnee Indians on Cody's wild west show. Lillie never recovered from the fever of show business, but unlike his mentor, Cody, Lillie managed to retire with a fortune invested in real estate, banking, oil and livestock. Lillie died in 1942.

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A show identified only as "great eastern" opened in Topeka on June 11 for a two day stand. The tents were pitched on the Haymarket at Fourth and Jackson streets, directly behind the courthouse.

Once again performing arts came in conflict with blind, but not deaf, Justice. "The sheriff," according to the *Kansas Democrat*, "ordered the canvas show in the rear of the courthouse to let up in its musical feature, as the court would not tolerate the annoyance. The circus people promptly obeyed."

The only advance publicity appeared June 10, in the North Topeka *Daily Courier*.

"The great eastern show has arrived in the city and is located at the corner of Fourth and Jackson streets, where they will remain for a few days before coming to the north side. Mr. Harry Hicks, the courteous proprietor, has the enviable reputation of having the most moral and interesting show on the road. The admission to the circus and museum is only 10 cents."

The *Democrat* reported on the 13th that, "The snide circus that showed at the Haymarket, opening Monday is gone. The tent was taken down late last night [Tuesday] and a caravan was formed which quietly went out of the city to the next stand."

*****

Topeka was not long without tented entertainment for on the day after the departure of the "great eastern" Howe's New London 10 Cent Show arrived to harvest any left over dimes. The aggregation opened June 13 for a four day stand at an unknown location.

The *Commonwealth* on June 16 ran the following review which provides nearly all of the information we have concerning the show.

"Howe's Circus To-Day.

"This afternoon and to-night Howe's London circus will give their farewell performance in Topeka. The show has exhibited here for the last three days, and has drawn tremendous crowds. No circus that has ever visited Topeka has given such universal satisfaction, and the great wonder is how so large and really meritorious a show can be given for so small a price of admission--ten cents. The show owns ten excellent cars, especially built for them, carries over one hundred employes and presents a performance that has about everything seen in the so-called big circus.

"Riders, tumblers, leapers, aerial artists--in fact everything that goes to make up a thorough-going circus can be seen at Howe's Ten Cent Circus, and a fine band enlivens the whole. Last night an audience composed of 2,700 people witnessed the performance and each of those people are its unpaid, unsolicited advertisers. There will undoubtedly be large crowds then at each of its final performances."

The parade of the circus on the 14th was noted in the press only for one incident. No description of the procession was given by any paper.

"At about 11 o'clock yesterday forenoon," the *Capital* reported, "as Howe's London Circus company was passing up Kansas avenue three colored boys attempted to have fun with the clown, the attempt proving to be somewhat of a boomerang. The clown was seated in a chariot driving a team of ponies and made a very attractive spectacle. Just as he got in front of the post office one of the colored boys, all of whom were in a lumber wagon, grabbed the clown's whip and pulled it out of his hand. It took the agile circus man about three-thirds of a second to jump out of his chariot, into the wagon and on to the colored urchin, whence all but he had fled, the other two having made their escape. The clown administered a very artistic and thorough thrashing to the young man and then rejoined the parade. It was as good as a circus. The crowd demanded an encore, but it was not given."

On Saturday, the last day of the run, Harry L. Bush sued the proprietors for $250 back wages and attached the show. The *Commonwealth* reported on June 20 that the case had been settled but provided no details.

*****

The Columbus *Star-Courier* of June 7 carried an advertisement for the Charles Andress show of 1888. In a short one-column ad it was announced,

"Good Show Coming
ANDRESS'
Carnival of Curiosities,
Trained Animal
Exposition,
And Congress of Living Wonders,
COLUMBUS,
Friday, June 15."

The text of the ad was interrupted by a cut of a clown riding a bucking pony, and then continued,

"100 STAR PERFORMERS 100
"Educated Tropical Birds,
Trained Brazil Dogs,
Performing Rocky Mountain Goats,
Celebrated Shetland Trick Ponies,
Prince & Duke and Nip & Tuck.
A Triple Troupe of Arionautic Stars.
Leapers, Tumblers, Jugglers, Balancers,
Contortionists, Acrobats, Dancers,
Singers, and Comedians.
4 FUNNY CLOWNS 4
Grand Outside Ascension Prior to Opening the Doors
Two Performances Daily at 2 and 8 p.m.
Admission--25 Cts.
Location of Canvas at Frisco Depot."

In a handout published the following week Andress boasted that "ladies and children can attend in perfect safety without an escort, should they desire." Concern for the delicacy of ladies was prevalent in the 1880s in the literature of the press agent. It seems that women were not much more than large children who needed to be protected from the realities of the world. These were the same women who shared the hardships of the frontier and in the face of incredible obstacles established homes, schools and churches and had enough energy left to fight a ceaseless war against Demon Rum. The helplessness of women--"the weaker sex"--was nothing but a self-serving conceit of their husbands, fathers, brothers or sons who kept their wives, daughters, sisters and mothers in a legal bondage.

The handout ended with, "It is a pure, moral and instructive exhibition and deserves the patronage of all lovers of innocent amusement."

There was nothing that might harm or embarrass women and children.

For the exhibitions at Columbus, June 15, the show claimed "100 STAR PER-

FORMERS 100." At Fredonia on June 19 the cast had dropped to "80 MERITORIOUS PERFORMERS 80." Eighty or one hundred, Andress must have counted every bird, every mountain goat, every Brazil dog and the fleas that feasted on them.

The *Wilson County Citizen*, Fredonia reported that, "The Andress show, which gave two exhibitions in Fredonia Tuesday, is a very good show for the price of admission. Many features are as good as are found in the larger tents of the regular circuses. The rains probably cut their receipts considerably."

Andress made a stand of three days in Wichita on June 25, 26 and 27. The *Eagle* carried no ads but the *Beacon* ran a one column display beginning June 20, with four later insertions, ending on opening day, the 25th.

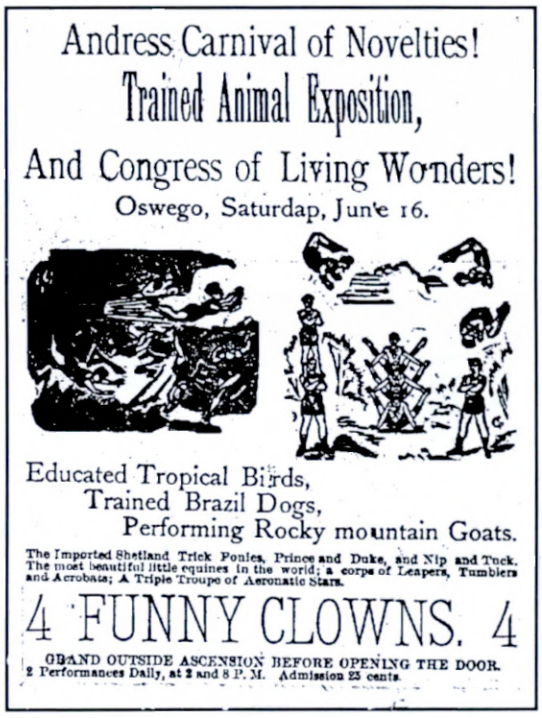
The *Eagle* on June 27 published a review that named some of the "80 meritorious Artists."

"The Andress Circus.

"In spite of rather disagreeable streets and weather the large tent was filled with people last night to see this very pleasing show. The performance commenced with leaping by the company headed by Billy O'Brien. A graceful slack wire act by Miss Ollie Maynard followed; then a clown song by Toney Zevard and the horizontal bar act by the Jerard brothers. Doc Miller won his audience by his daring pyramidal balancing act. The Maynards, Mark and Ollie, in a daring trapeze act scored a big hit. Joe Lewis is the best contortionist that ever appeared here and is certainly entitled to the name of the 'man serpent.' Prof. Andress and his wonderful troupe of performing dogs was one of the best features of the evening; another most deserving performance was that given by Prof. Wood's Shetland ponies. Carroll Oridy did a good piece of jugglery and Johnny Slater closed with a graceful perch act. There was not a lame feature in the show from beginning to end; and all who attend can be assured a first class entertainment.

"Performance today at 1 p.m. and the last performance in the city tonight at 8."

In a review that seems fair and reasonable the Larned *Chronoscope* reported, "Those who attended 'Andress' Carnival, etc.' on Thursday afternoon and evening, are somewhat divided in their opinions concerning its merits, some saying that there were so few animals that they were disappointed, while others say that the performance was quite good and that they enjoyed it. All agree in thinking the trained dogs just 'too cute for anything,' and the dogs themselves seemed to enjoy the performance of their many cunning tricks as much as the on-lookers. The children were not disappointed in anything but enjoyed everything from the tiny birds to the cinnamon bear and the contortionist, who did so many wonderful things." An intensive search for the Andress route through Kansas in 1888 has been disappointing. Sometimes a show vanishes in thin air, avoiding all logical towns, but Andress did play Columbus, June 15; Oswego, June 16; Fredonia, June 19; Winfield, June 20; Wichita, June 25, 26, 27; and Larned, July 5.


Andress Carnival of Novelties!
Trained Animal Exposition,
And Congress of Living Wonders!
Oswego, Saturdap, June 16.
Educated Tropical Birds,
Trained Brazil Dogs,
Performing Rocky mountain Goats.
The Imported Shetland Trick Ponies, Prince and Duke, and Nip and Tuck. The most beautiful little equines in the world; a corps of Leapers, Tumblers and Acrobats; A Triple Troupe of Aeronatic Stars.
4 FUNNY CLOWNS. 4
GRAND OUTSIDE ASCENSION BEFORE OPENING THE DOOR.
2 Performances Daily, at 2 and 8 P. M. Admission 25 cents.

This Andress newspaper ad appeared in the Oswego, Kansas *Bee* on June 9, 1888. Kansas State Historical Society.

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"WANTED for
JAS. T. JOHNSON'S
Jumbo Wagon Show, Circus and
Menagerie, Museum and Amphitheater,
People In All Circus Branches,
Leapers, Tumblers, Riders, Lady Gymnasts, Clowns, Museum Freaks, etc. Must be all first-class people in the business. Salary must be low, according to the times. This season no fares advanced only to the right people who can give the best of references, fares to be deducted out of their salary; salary to commence when show opens; show to open the 1st of April, or sooner if possible. A good, well experienced agent is wanted and a few more animals. Address Jas. T. Johnson, Arkansas City, Kansas"

The key phrase in the ad, which appeared in the New York *Clipper* of February 11, 1888, is "Salary must be low, according to the times." Johnson had been in Arkansas City for an unknown length of time and had been greatly ignored by the press. In later seasons Johnson operated an amphitheater in Arkansas City, and a building-type presentation was probably in operation in 1888, although there is no proof. Nearly all that is known of Johnson's activities is to be found in the *Clipper*, which on April 28, published a roster of the Johnson show.

"Executive staff--James T. Johnson, Proprietor and Manager; Harry Kelly, assistant manager; Col. John Williams, advance representative; Frank Durand, bill poster with five assistants; G. W. Belford, equestrian director; D. S. Gerry, manager of side show. Performers--Thos. Delavante, Wm. Phelps, Harry Nelson, C. H. Lowry, Mons. Zingarelo, John Phillips, Sam Hoffsmyre, the Johnson Sisters, Mollie Belford, Lottie Gerry, Mlle. Clare, Edith Johnson, Lillie Delavante; Edwin Freeman, boss canvass man; Jesse Carrol, boss hostler. Leader of the band Theo. Schottle. The show is in Arkansas City for an indefinite period."

The above list represents a substantial increase over the past few seasons, and could possibly be an indication of greater prosperity for Johnson. It could also indicate an influx of money from a new investor, or it could be due to Johnson's great abilities as a con man.

The following announcement appeared in the Wichita *Eagle* of May 5:

"Special.

"Jas. T. Johnson's circus, corner Fourth Avenue and First Street, for one week, commencing Saturday, May 5. A great old time circus. Don't fail to see it. Superb cornet band. Free exhibition every day at 1:30 o'clock. Hard time prices. General admission 25¢, reserved seats 35¢, children 15¢. Every thing chaste, moral and refined. Can be visited by ladies and children can come with propriety. Good order will be maintained throughout."

Johnson ran no display ads for his Wichita engagement, but both of Wichita's leading papers, the *Eagle* and the *Beacon*, were peppered with small items.

"Johnson's circus, corner of Fourth avenue and First street, one week, commencing Saturday May 5th. Free exhibition each day at 1:30. General admission 25¢, reserved seats 35¢, children 15." (Beacon, May 5).

"Johnson's circus don't show on Sunday but the tent is open free to any religious services." (*Eagle*, May 6).

"Jas. T. Johnson's circus was attended by a very large crowd last Saturday afternoon and night, although there were no flaming posters on the dead walls of the city. Who is Johnson? The world famed circus man. Where is his show? Corner

Fourth avenue and First street." (*Eagle*, May 8).

"The Mexican ladder act at the circus is immense. Don't fail to see it." (*Eagle*, May 8).

"See the 'GUYMACUE' (sic) at the circus tonight. Corner Fourth and First street." (*Eagle*, May 8).

"James T. Johnson's circus played last night to another crowded house, all seemed well pleased. Come again tonight." (*Beacon*, May 9).

"Change of program at the circus tonight, corner of Fourth avenue and First street." (*Beacon*, May 10).

The *Eagle* of May 11 announced a matinee May 12 with presents for all school children. One hundred years later some of the gifts seem bizarre, but in 1888 it was legal to keep poultry within any city of the state.

"There will be a ladies' and children's matinee given at Johnson's circus on Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock. All school children will be admitted to the circus for 10 cents each. All children holding a ticket will receive a present and the lucky ones will receive the following: 1 doll, 1 knife, 1 pair of ducks, 1 little pig, 1 hen and brood of chickens, etc. 1000 presents given away. Don't fail to attend."

Business was so good that Johnson extended his visit for another week.

"Mr. Johnson, the circus man," according to the *Eagle* of May 15, "had a proposal made him from the citizens of Wichita to remain here all summer. Wichita is a good town for an enterprise of this kind and Mr. Johnson has lots of friends here that will endorse him."

One wonders what the cost was to his host of friends. In any event event Johnson was still playing Wichita as reported June 24, in the *Eagle*.

"Johnson's circus had a very large audience last night and the sparring match was a success, although it was a draw after four rounds and will be repeated tonight. Don't fail to see it."

The *Beacon* was so impressed with the Johnson sisters that they ran seven stanzas of the purest doggeral, as may be judged from stanzas three and four.

"Beneath a broad pavilion, where many who for pleasure

"Had repaired and found enjoyment in merry mirth and song,

"Was rendered a production which proved indeed a treasure

"To many sorrow laden ones who mingled with the throng.

"Ella and Edna Johnson in their delightful acting

"On ladder and trapeze, in their many special acts,

"Taught a lesson with a moral, by applause they were exacting

"That merit is rewarded and the best of proof is facts."

When Johnson left Wichita is unknown, but the only other report found so far concerning the season of 1888 is one sentence in the Howard *Courant* of July 20. "J. T. Johnson's Great Western Show showed to a small audience in Howard last Saturday (July 14).

*****

Sam McFlinn returned to Topeka in 1888 and the event was noted by an entry in the City of Topeka's Treasurer's Receipts, "August 20, 1888, received from S. McFlinn, for 'street show' Monday, August 20 through August 25, $10." The only printed notice to appear in advance of the show was a handout in the Topeka *State Journal* of August 18.

"Sam MacFlinn's Popular
10 Cent Circus

"Will pitch tents for a week's stay next Monday, the 20th, on the lot corner of Fourth and Jackson streets. This company was here last summer and give the best of satisfaction. This year they have enlarged the show, making it the leading 10 cent show traveling. Mr. MacFlinn is the originator of dime circuses. In his company will be found some of the leading artists in the profession. The celebrated Patterson brothers, acrobats and horizontal bar performers; 'Zazell,' the celebrated aerial queen; the Nicholas family, gymnastics; Dr. James L. Thayer, the old clown; Mons. Vaulette, oriental juggler and many other well known artists, including educated horses, ponies, mules, dogs, goats and monkeys. Mr. MacFlinn vouches for the entertainment being first-class, moral and refined. Special attention shown to ladies and children. Two performances daily, afternoon and night at the usual hours. Admission only 10 cents. Good seat-cushioned chairs 10 cents extra."

The Topeka *Daily Capital* of August 21 reported on the opening exhibition.

"Sam McFlinn's Big Dime Circus Last Night.

"At a few minutes past 8 o'clock every available seat was taken and a very fashionable audience witnessed the splendid performance. The show throughout was good. Deserving of special mention are the celebrated Patterson brothers on the horizontal bars. Mr. George Patterson's feat of turning a backward double somersault from the giant swing was the best ever seen in this city. The tumbling and brother act by the Nicholas family was well done. In fact the show is the best dime circus seen in Topeka this year. They remain all this week, giving two performances daily. Admission only 10 cents. Go and spend a pleasant evening. You will be well pleased.

The *Journal* spelled it "MacFlinn" and the *Capital* spelled it "McFlinn." The city license, a legal document, spelled the name without the "a" and on that basis "McFlinn" is probably correct.

Where the show played before the Topeka date or where it went afterwards is a mystery.

*****

A tantalizing bit appeared in the *Marshall County News*, Marysville, August 24, and nothing more was ever mentioned.

"Kit, Lees & Castella's advertising car has been side-tracked here this week, waiting for the enlargement and reorganizing of the show, which will now embrace as its principal feature a menagerie, museum and aquarium. We cannot definitely announce date, but it will be in the near future."

*****

Grenier Brothers' Royal European Railroad Circus and Menagerie, coming from a tour of Nebraska, entered Kansas for exhibitions at Concordia on August 29, and Washington on August 30. Since no other Kansas dates have been discovered it may be presumed that the show returned to Nebraska for appearances at Fairbury or Hebron.

*****

Grenier Brothers was unique in that it boasted of being a "1 Ring Circus. 1 Big Menagerie." One ring shows in Kansas in 1888 were not unknown but their advertising was designed to deceive the public on the vastness of their presentations, or, more correctly, the lack of vastness.

"WAIT UNTIL WE ARE WITH YOU!" was at the top of all ads used in both Concordia and Washington. The command to "WAIT" must have been due to a rampant paranoia for there was no sign of competition at either town. The same declaration was used in all ads,

"Be Sure and See It.
because

"We have a grand arenic assembly from all nations. Male and female champions of many lands. A cyclone of pastime. No old acts. No two or three rings to bewilder you. One big old time ring and a first-class one ring performance. We satisfy everybody--young and old. Everything new, strictly moral and praiseworthy. A stupendous menagerie. Trained and educated animals from all parts of the globe. Moleck, the largest horse on earth, 21 hands high 2550 pounds. A $10,000 den of

performing lions, a herd of performing elephants, the only educated hippopotamus on earth. Celebrated American and European riders, male and female in heroic deeds and rivalry. Aerial sensational acts, lofty ladder acrobats, active votigeurs. Caledonian athletes, wonderful jugglers, tight rope stars, high standing wire slides, electric leaping and tumbling quadruple high brother acts, equilibrist heruclean feats of strength. Arabian and Japanese jugglers and aerialists, funny clowns, two celebrated bands--Prof. Ward's lady band and Armstrong's American band in new and catching music. A grand street parade at 10 o'clock. Everything advertised truthfully seen with our big railroad shows. The carnival day is coming, its equal impossible. Come to town early. Seats for ten thousand people. See our city of tents. We have requested the authorities of your city to issue no license to people who may attempt to run games of chance on the streets, as we allow none in or about the show grounds. Let this be a grand gala day of rest, recreation and innocent amusement. Suspend operations for a day, close up shop, stop the plow, hang up the scythe, rest yourselves, rest your families, give your children a holiday, we want to see you all. We travel in our own train of 22 novel and beautiful fifty foot cars especially built for this enormous World's Fair."

Grenier Brothers claimed to be successors to Burr Robbins, but the most interesting claim was, "We travel in our own train of 22 novel and beautiful fifty foot cars especially built for this enormous World's Fair."

In neither town did any reporter count the cars.

"BEAR IN MIND THE
PLACE, DAY AND DATE!

"We never change our date. We never divide our shows. Two exhibitions daily at 1 and 7 p.m. Circus performance an hour later. Admission 50 Cents. Children under 9 years 25 Cents."

Handouts were scarce in both towns and are of small interest, being vague references to what a hit the show had been in Chicago.

The Concordia *Times* following Circus Day reported, "The Grenier Bros. at this place yesterday and last night was very creditable. While not as great as Barnum's in many respects, yet their acting etc. gave satisfaction and that is more than can be said of many circuses that visit Concordia."

Like papers in many a town, the editors of the *Times* sadly bemoaned "Thousands 'blew in' their dollars to the circus yesterday who were 'too poor to take a newspaper.'"

The Grenier show used this newspaper ad during the 1888 season. Circus World Museum collection.

The *Kansas Blade*, Concordia, August 31, held a slightly different opinion from that of the *Times*.

"NOT BANKRUPT YET.
The Large Throngs of
People Make 'Dull
Times' Look Pale.

"If a stranger from the far east had stood on our street at 11 o'clock a. m. today he would not have imagined that last year was a failure of the corn crop, and this year a partial failure, as the large number of well dressed country people, witnessing the street parade of Grenier Bros. Circus, had no indication of any such misfortune. The fact is farmers have something besides corn to depend upon and two years of partial failure does not keep the young folks from the Circus. We shall not attempt to estimate the crowd, as guesses are so very uncertain, but will simply content ourselves by saying that it was about as large as usual on such occasions.

"The street parade was a fair one, not quite so good as a former one which was the best part of the show, but good enough and made without causing any mishap by frightened teams.

"We noticed that every township in the county was represented under the canvas. The day was very generally kept as one of recreation and enjoyment."

In another column the *Blade* quoted a dispatch from the Omaha (Nebraska) *Bee*.

"Grenier's Show Slandered.

"Reports having been circulated that the attaches of Grenier's circus were a bad behaving lot of people the Omaha *Bee* took the pains to have telegraphed to it from places where they showed to get the truth of the matter and the following is the result of its investigation: 'ALMA, Neb., Aug 25--(To the *Bee*)--The Grenier Bros.' circus was here on the 16th, and it seems to be the universal verdict of the people of Alma that it was freer from gamblers and criminals than any circus they had ever attended anywhere. From their conduct here I can most heartily recommend them. F. S. Beal, Mayor.'

"'BLOOMINGTON, Nebraska, August 25--(To The *Bee*.)--When here Grenier Bros'. circus was a moral entertainment in every respect. No confidence Then or criminals connected with it so far as we are able to ascertain. Wm. A. Cole, Mayor.'

"'SUPERIOR, Nebraska, August 25.--(To the *Bee*.)--Grenier Bros'. circus was one of the quietest shows we ever witnessed. The city was full of people when they exhibited here, and not a single depredation of any kind was committed. C. E. Adams, Mayor.'

"'RED CLOUD, Nebraska, August 25--(To the *Bee*.)--Grenier Bros. have a very good circus and all are good behaving people. Geo. B. Holland, Mayor.'

"'NELSON, Nebraska, August 25--(To the *Bee*.)--Character of Grenier Bros.' circus outfit here was good. E. L. Warden, Sheriff.'"

The only report from Washington after the show had come and gone was one sentence in the *Republican*, "The circus was well attended."

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Topeka, Kansas.

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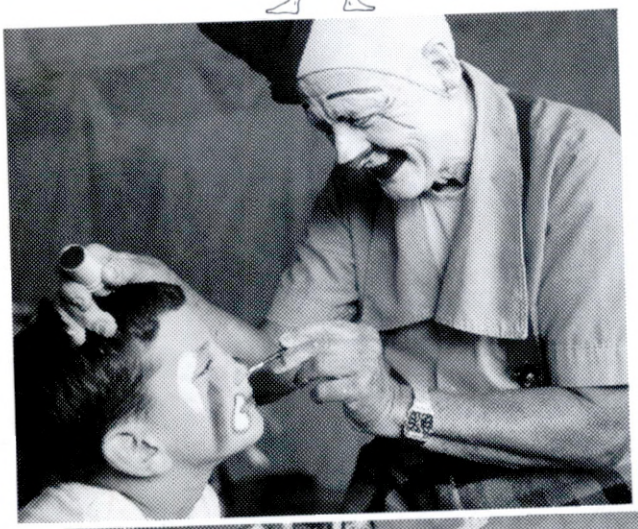

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